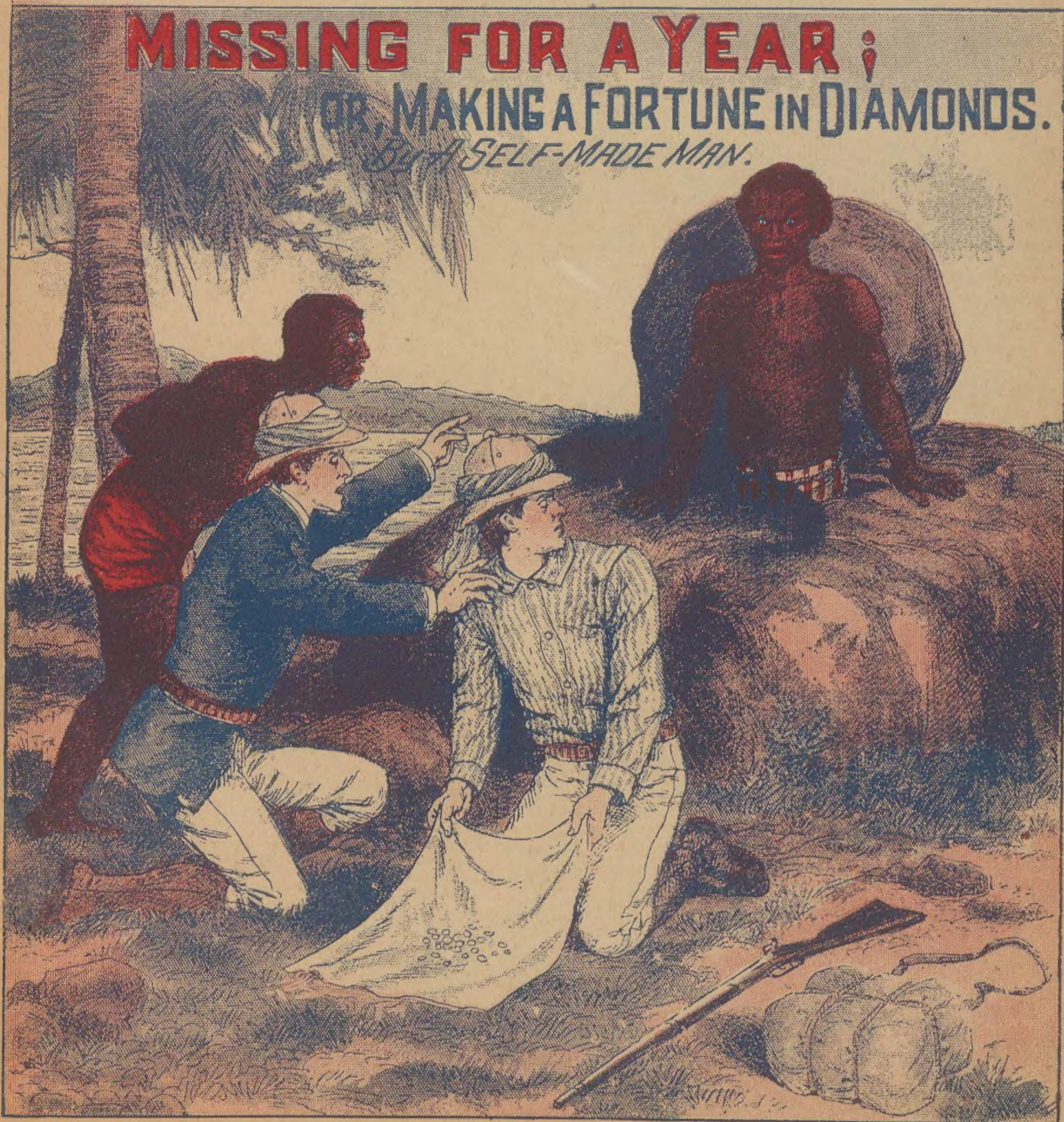


FAME AND

FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

MISSING FOR A YEAR;
OR, MAKING A FORTUNE IN DIAMONDS.
By A SELF-MADE MAN.



As the boys were examining the rough diamonds they heard a noise behind them. Turning, they saw the stone on the mound rise slowly, and the head, shoulders and body of a fierce-looking negro came out through the hole beneath it.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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Missing For A Year

OR, MAKING A FORTUNE IN DIAMONDS

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—The Plot.

"Well, Mr. Golding, what do you intend to do now?" asked Lawyer Horatio Mudge of a good-looking, well-dressed young man of eight and twenty, who sat facing him in his office on Broadway one afternoon in May. "Your deceased uncle, Harper Golding, has left the bulk of his property to your cousin, Sidney Sherwood, and cut you off with an insignificant \$5,000, which won't begin to meet the I O U's I hold against you."

"The matter requires reflection," replied the young man, with a sour look.

"Reflection!" ejaculated the lawyer. "Humph! No amount of reflection will alter the fact that you are not, after all, your uncle's heir."

Henry Golding drummed on the lawyer's desk with his fingers and looked out of the window. His disappointment and inward anger at learning that he was shorn of the wealth he had long counted upon as a certainty showed in his face. In fact he was yet a bit dazed by the unexpected disclosure revealed by the chief paragraph in the will of his recently deceased uncle which the lawyer had just read to him from the rough draft of the instrument.

"I have loaned to you, from time to time, various sums, which aggregate about \$15,000, on the assumption that when Mr. Golding died you would come into his property. As a matter of fact the old gentleman more than once gave me to understand that you were his favorite nephew, and when I drew up his first will six-months ago you were the chief beneficiary. Imagine then my surprise when, in answer to his summons a few days ago, as he lay on what proved to be his death bed, he directed me to draw up a new will, substituting your cousin's name for yours as his heir, and leaving you a mere pittance. That document will be read in his library to-morrow after the funeral, but for reasons of my own I sent for you in order to let you know in advance just how you stand with respect to it. Now, young man, perhaps you will explain how it happened that at the eleventh hour you incurred your uncle's displeasure?"

"It can serve no purpose, Mr. Mudge, for me to go into particulars," replied Henry Golding, bitterly. "I will merely say that we had a serious

misunderstanding with reference to my style of living. He was an old foggy, and his ideas of what a gentleman of my age and prospects ought or ought not to do were not quite up to date."

"I presume he thought you were living a bit too fast, eh?"

"I'm not responsible for what he thought," replied Henry Golding, evidently not pleased by the question. "A man of his age and old-fashioned habits could not be expected to see things in the light that I saw them."

"Of course not," answered the lawyer, dryly. "Still, no one could accuse my late respected client as being otherwise than a sensible and level-headed old gentleman."

The remark was evidently distasteful to the young man, for he said, a bit impatiently:

"Will you kindly read over once more the paragraph in the will which makes Sidney Sherwood heir to the greater part of my uncle's property? I believe there is a condition attached to it."

"There is—a most charming condition I should call it," replied the lawyer, with a dry smile.

"You refer to the young lady—Bessie Bronson—I presume?"

"Of course. It is hardly necessary for me to go over the paragraph again. Relieved of its legal points it amounts to this—that Mr. Golding bequeaths the residue of his property, which includes his house on Madison Avenue, and the contents thereof, not otherwise disposed of; his stocks and bonds in his safe deposit vault, and all his money after his debts and the other legacies have been paid, to his nephew, Sidney Sherwood, provided——"

"That's what I was getting at," interrupted the young man; "provided Sidney marries Bessie Bronson within a year from the date of the will."

"Conditional on the young lady consenting to become his wife. If Miss Bronson refuses to marry him he will be legally entitled to claim the property anyway. But if he should refuse to marry her——"

"He wouldn't be such a fool. I'd marry any woman myself under similar conditions."

"I don't think he'll refuse to abide by the condition, for I have seen the young lady, and can

say that she is an uncommonly pretty and intelligent girl."

"Has he met her?"

"No. Nor has he ever heard of her to my knowledge. She is the daughter of an old chum of the late Mr. Golding. She is traveling in Europe at present as companion of a wealthy lady, but will return to New York long before the year is out. Mr. Golding thought a great deal of her, and in the event that Sidney Sherwood should refuse to marry her, the property will be equally divided between you and her. It would, therefore, be greatly to your interest if your cousin found some strong objection to wedding the girl."

"No fear of his finding any objection," said the young man. "He'll marry her all right if she'll have him, and no girl is going to refuse a rich husband."

"In which case you will have to put up with your legacy of \$5,000," said the lawyer, eyeing his visitor intently.

"Yes, blame the luck!" ejaculated Henry Golding, almost fiercely.

"I shall expect you to turn that sum over to me in partial liquidation of the amount you owe me. In fact, as executor of Mr. Golding's estate, I shall pay myself and hand you a receipt on account."

"Why, you wouldn't do such a thing as that, would you?" cried the young man, aghast at the idea of losing even his small legacy.

"You owe it to me, don't you, and twice as much more?" said the lawyer.

"Yes, but to take a fellow's legacy clean away from him especially when I need the money badly now that my uncle's death has cut off my regular income, is pretty fierce."

"It seems to me that you are always in need of money though your uncle paid you a very decent allowance."

"It takes money for a chap to make a respectable showing," protested Henry Golding.

"Humph! The trouble with you, young man, is that you stand in with an expensive set—young men whose incomes are much larger than your own, and in order to try and hold your own you have taken to gambling."

"Who says so?" flashed the visitor.

"I say so. Within the last month or two it occurred to me to find out what was the reason of your always claiming to be hard up. Well, I hired a private detective to investigate you, and here," opening a drawer in his desk and taking out several typewritten sheets, "are his reports. Shall I read them to you?" he added, grimly.

"What right had you to hire a private detective to shadow me?" demanded the young man, hotly.

"Because you owed me a large sum of money, and I was interested in you," replied the lawyer coolly.

"I think it was decidedly unfair of you."

"Well, we won't argue the matter. At present I only see my way clear to one-third of the sum due me. What I want to know is how you propose to pay me the balance?"

"I couldn't tell you," replied his visitor in sulky defiance.

"That is as much as to say that I can whistle for the \$10,000 which I lent you in good faith?"

"I have no way of getting money. I suppose I shall go to the dogs now. I've never worked

in my life and wouldn't know how to go about getting a position that would support me."

"And you couldn't hold it if you did get one. You seem to be utterly incapable of making an honest living."

"Well, it's my uncle's fault," replied the young man, bitterly. "He brought me up as a gentleman, and then after spoiling me he took offense at my manner of conducting myself and has cast me on my own resources, as if I were an old shoe. It's an outrage," he added, fiercely.

"Well, I agree with you that it wasn't a fair way to treat you. Knowing your habits and weaknesses as I do I remonstrated with your uncle when I received the directions for his new will. I endeavored to persuade him to leave you \$25,000 at least."

"So that you could make sure of your \$15,000. I suppose," said Henry Golding, with a covert sneer.

"I admit that self-interest had something to do with it. Do you blame me?"

The young man made no reply.

"Mr. Golding, however, wouldn't listen to my suggestion, and so I was obliged to prepare the will as he wished it, and so it stands."

"Why did you send for me, Mr. Mudge? Was it simply to inform me in advance of the desperate position I am in? So far as the money I owe you is concerned you didn't expect I would be able to promise you an early payment, did you?"

"I will answer your last question by saying frankly that I did not. I know that as matters stand you can't pay me, and that you never will be in a position to pay me unless——"

"Unless what?" asked Golding, as the lawyer paused, cracked his knuckles and looked hard at his visitor.

"Your cousin should fail to comply with the conditions of the will."

"I wouldn't bet a nickel on my chances in that respect."

"Neither would I. Still you know while there's life there is hope," said the lawyer, pointedly.

"Not in my case."

"Yes, in your case."

"Perhaps you will show me where the hope comes in?"

"I will on one condition."

"What is that?" asked Golding, curiously.

"That I am recompensed for my professional advice."

"That's pretty good," laughed the young man, sardonically, "when I am practically dead broke at this moment."

"I don't ask cash down. I'll take your note, due and payable one year hence."

"One year?"

"Exactly—one year."

"For how much?"

"For the sum of \$50,000, which will include what you already owe me."

Henry Golding stared at the lawyer in surprise and some bewilderment.

"What are you trying to get at?" he asked.

"This: Agree to pay me \$50,000 when you are in the position to command that sum of money and I will point out a way by which you can, if you have the nerve and resolution to act, succeed to the major part of your late uncle's wealth."

"You can do that?" cried Golding, in eager excitement.

"I can and will."

"Then I agree. I'll agree to anything that will rescue me from the intolerable prospect that at present confronts me."

"I thought you would. It's a bargain between us, and must be kept a secret."

"I'll never say a word about it," said Golding, earnestly.

"Before I say anything further I'll draw up the note and you must sign it. I always do business in a business-like way."

"I warrant you do."

"As soon as that necessary preliminary has been attended to I'll tell you how you can get around the will if you've got the spunk to make the effort."

"Oh, I've got spunk enough, don't you worry, Mr. Mudge, when it's a question of extricating myself from a desperate predicament."

"I'm glad to hear it," said the lawyer, taking a blank printed form of a promissory note from a drawer of his desk and filling it up.

Then he pushed it toward the young man and handed him his pen. Henry Golding glanced over it, and without a word affixed his signature.

"Very good," said Mr. Mudge; "now we will proceed to business. When your uncle refused to put you down for more than \$5,000 in his will I realized that my chance of collecting the other \$10,000 you owed me was rather slim, and as charity always begins at home with me I put my wits to work and in drawing up the important paper I left what we lawyers call a loop-hole with the view of helping you out, for I've never seen young Sidney Sherwood, and have no particular interest in his welfare."

"While you have \$10,000 worth in mine, eh?" chuckled the young man.

"Precisely. Although the loss of \$10,000 would not particularly embarrass me, still I would prefer to have it back with interest."

"Thirty-five thousand is pretty good interest."

"I'm not charging you that for interest. I'm not quite such a Shylock as that. The \$35,000 is for expert professional advice."

"Oh, I see. Your advice comes pretty high."

"This is a special case, and as it ought to put fully \$50,000 into your pocket, which you couldn't get otherwise, why I don't think it's dear."

"That's right," nodded Golding. "Instead of being broke and \$10,000 in debt to you I shall be worth at least \$50,000 if your advice works out as you expect."

"Exactly."

"What is this loop-hole you mentioned?"

"This: The condition attaching to the clause which makes Sidney Sherwood his uncle's heir is so worded that if the marriage between him and Bessie Bronson does not take place within a year from the date of the will he loses his legacy."

"Oh, is that all?" replied the young man, in a disappointed tone. "He'll take care that it does take place within the year, if the girl is willing, and if she isn't willing he gets the property anyway."

"Well, it's up to you to see that it does not take place within the year," replied the lawyer.

"Up to me?"

"Yes. The young people may get engaged, they

may even stand up before the minister to be married, but if the words pronouncing them man and wife are not pronounced before the clock strikes midnight on the 365th day from the date of the will, Sidney Sherwood is down and out so far as his uncle's property is concerned."

"I know; but how am I to prevent this marriage?"

"That is for you to figure on, though I will give you all the assistance, as an adviser, that I can, for we are in the same boat in this thing."

"I'm open to suggestions."

"I will suggest then that you lose not a moment in getting busy," said Mr. Mudge. "No one but you and I know that Harper Golding has made Sidney Sherwood his heir conditionally. To insure the success of your cause your cousin must not learn about it for a year at least. I have notified him to attend the funeral to-morrow, and as principal legatee it is his place to be present when the will is read. You must see that he does not attend. In other words your prospects of coming into half of the bulk of your uncle's property depend on you arranging matters so that Sidney Sherwood will be missing for a year."

CHAPTER II.—Mr. Nelson Dicer.

"Missing for a year!" repeated Henry Golding.

The lawyer nodded.

"I don't see how I can accomplish it."

"It's a very simple matter if you go to work about it right."

"I fail to see it in that light."

"If I were in your shoes I'd see that he was kidnaped this night and carried away to some other part of the world. Pay some one, who can be depended on, well to keep him in sight and prevent him from returning to this country for a year. It will take money, and you have none, but I will advance you the funds necessary to carry out your purpose, and this advance will be considered as part of the \$50,000 I am to receive when you come into your proper legacy. I will give you \$1,000 now to begin operations with. I will take your I O U for it. Lose not a moment in making your arrangements, for if Sidney Sherwood is at the reading of the will to-morrow afternoon I wouldn't give much for your prospects."

"Give me the money. I know a man who I think I can depend on to help me out. I'll have to trust him to a considerable extent to induce him to undertake a commission that will run a year, and I guess he won't do it a cent less than \$5,000, if he will do it for that, but he's the man for the job."

"Very good. See him at once. Don't stand on a matter of a thousand or two in making your deal. Make it worth your man's while to undertake the enterprise and carry it out. Everything depends on keeping your cousin away for a year, remember that."

Lawyer Mudge took Henry Golding's I O U for \$1,000 and handed him the money. The young man then got up, bade the attorney good-day and left the office. About the time that the interview we have just described terminated, the ob-

MISSING FOR A YEAR

ject of it, Sidney Sherwood, was finishing his day's work in the office of a wholesale establishment on Jacob Street, not far from the Brooklyn Bridge. The firm dealt in hides and leather, and the boy, who was a bright-looking lad of eighteen, had not yet got accustomed to the peculiar smell that pervaded the warehouse. He didn't believe he'd get accustomed to it, either, and was already on the lookout for another job. He had been born and raised in New York, and had had to work ever since he graduated from the public school at the age of fourteen.

His father, who died about the time he left school, had been a clever artist, with high ideals, but not a successful money maker, consequently the family was often hard pushed to make ends meet.

His mother, the only sister of Harper Golding, capitalist, had married Bruce Sherwood in defiance of her brother's wishes, and in consequence was practically disowned by her wealthy brother, who cut off the income he had previously allowed her, and refused to have any communication with her.

Sidney knew he had a rich uncle, but the circumstances, had no expectations that the fact would do him any good.

Harper Golding knew that his sister had a son, and until six months before his death had no interest in the boy's existence.

Then he received word one day that his sister had just died.

The intelligence was something of a shock to him, for after all blood is thicker than water.

He called at the little flat where Sidney was the only mourner, introduced himself to the boy, noted his strong, handsome, self-reliant face, and took charge of the funeral arrangements.

He and Sidney rode to the grave together, and though he tried to make friends with the lad he was not very successful, for Sid resented the treatment that Mr. Golding had handed out to his mother because she chose to marry the man of her choice.

From that moment the capitalist took a kind of interest in his youngest nephew, and determined to remember him in his will.

He had his will drawn about this time by Mr. Horatio Mudge, his legal adviser.

His brother's son, Henry Golding, figured as chief heir and Sid was put down for \$20,000.

The boy knew nothing about it, however, and did not even take the trouble to call on his rich uncle, though he was invited to do so.

That morning he was somewhat surprised to see the notice of his uncle's death in the morning paper, and as Mr. Golding had attended his mother's funeral he felt in duty bound to return the compliment.

The junior partner gave him permission to absent himself for the purpose, and consequently he only expected to be at the office a couple of hours next day.

When he put the books away in the safe on the stroke of five, and walked out of the office to go uptown to his boarding-house, he did not dream that it was the last time he would attend to that work.

He was just finishing his dinner when the servant, who had been summoned to the front door by a ring at the bell, came to him and handed him an envelope.

"The man who left this is waiting for you in the parlor," said the girl.

"Who is he?" asked Sid, a bit wonderingly, for he was not accustomed to have visitors.

"He didn't give his name. He's well dressed and said he'd wait till you had finished your dinner."

Sid tore open the envelope and read the note. It ran as follows:

"Sidney Sherwood—Dear Sir: You are herewith notified of the death of your uncle, Harper Golding. The funeral service will take place this evening at eight o'clock, at his late residence, No. —, Madison Avenue, and you are earnestly requested to be present. The bearer of this note will take you to the house in a carriage. Interment tomorrow in Woodlawn. Sincerely yours,
"HENRY GOLDING."

"So the services take place this evening? I'll go of course," Sid said to himself, quite unconscious that he was about to walk into the trap prepared for him by his rascally cousin, aided and abetted by Lawyer Horatio Mudge.

He walked up to the parlor and found a smartly dressed man, with a kind of sporty air, awaiting him.

"You are Sidney Sherwood, I think?" said the caller.

"Yes, sir."

"My name is Nelson Dicer."

"Pleased to know you, Mr. Dicer."

"You read the note I brought, I suppose, and will accompany me to the late residence of your deceased uncle. I have a cab outside."

"Yes, I'll go with you; but it'll take me about a quarter of an hour to get ready."

"That's all right. There is no rush. I'll wait your convenience. We have plenty of time for it's only seven now," said Mr. Dicer, twirling his heavy black mustache and showing a glittering set of teeth.

Sid ran up to his room to change his everyday clothes for his best ones, and to otherwise improve his personal appearance, for as a relative of the deceased he judged that he would attract some attention. Inside of twenty minutes he was down in the parlor again.

"All ready, eh?" said Mr. Dicer, getting up from his chair.

They left the house and the visitor held the door of the cab open for Sid to get in and then followed himself. The driver started his horse and the vehicle rolled slowly away eastward.

"You're a nephew of the deceased, I believe," said Mr. Dicer.

"I am," replied Sid.

"The old gentleman never recognized you to any great extent while he was alive, did he?"

"No, sir. I never saw him until at the time of my mother's death, six months ago. Then he came to our flat and introduced himself. He was friendly enough to me, but for good and sufficient reasons I made no effort to cultivate his friendship," replied Sid.

"No?" ejaculated the sporty looking man. "A rich uncle is a good thing to have. Most people would make up to one."

"I had no expectation of benefiting by the relationship."

"The unexpected often happens," remarked Mr.

at my room to take up to the house. I came near forgetting it."

He opened the cab door and spoke to the driver, directing him to turn down Sixth Avenue to a certain cross street, and giving him the number of his house. During the short ride Mr. Dicer explained that he was connected with one of the big circus organizations, and that he was on the eve of taking a trip to the coast of Africa after some animals for the menagerie.

"How would you like to go with me, young man?" he said.

"Go with you—to Africa?"

"Yes. I need an assistant, and the boy who was to accompany me has been taken ill and can't go. I must have somebody, and as I rather fancy you I'll take you if you say so."

Sid was rather astonished at the offer from a comparative stranger.

"I'm much obliged to you, Mr. Dicer, but though I am thinking of making a change in my business I am not sure I would care to go so far from the United States, particularly as I have no idea how I could make myself useful to you."

"Don't let that fact worry you. Your duties will not be hard, and you will receive ten dollars a week and your expenses. We shall be gone till the spring, and then I'll find you a job in the executive department of the show. Better say 'Yes' and I'll make out a contract right away at my room for you to sign."

"I'd like a little time to consider your offer," replied Sid. "It is possible I might accept it."

"Well," said the sporty man, as the cab stopped beside the curb, "I can't give you much time, as the steamer sails shortly and I've taken passage for myself and assistant. Come up to my room and I'll make out the contract and you can take it home with you and look it over. I'll give you till to-morrow night to consider the offer."

Mr. Dicer alighted from the cab and held the door open for Sid to get out.

The boy accompanied him to a square room on the second floor back.

"What do you drink, Sherwood?" the sporty man said, after entering the room. "I have some A1 whisky——"

"I don't drink whisky, or in fact anything but water," replied Sid.

"Oh, you must take something with me. Take a glass of soda."

"Well, I'll do that, since you insist."

Mr. Dicer opened a bottle of soda which he had in the closet and poured it into a tumbler in the bottom of which lay a white powder. He took a small quantity of whisky himself, and they drank together.

"You'll excuse me a moment, Sherwood, while I go and get that bundle I have to take to the Golding residence," said Mr. Dicer.

"Certainly," replied Sid.

"Here is a book in which you'll find some circus scenes taken from life," said the sporty man, taking a tan-colored cloth book from a shelf and laying it before the boy, after which he walked out of the room, closing the door behind him.

Sid looked at the book with some curiosity.

It was called "On the Road With a Circus." Glancing through it the boy saw it was profusely illustrated by half-tone engravings reproduced

Dicer. "That reminds me that I have a package from photographs of actual scenes. He was looking at the picture of a fair mounted equestrienne teaching her favorite horse new tricks in an open field outside the circus tent when he became conscious of a strange and unaccountable buzzing in his ears, while he felt oppressed by a peculiar dopy feeling.

"What in thunder is the matter with me?" he exclaimed, pushing the book aside and starting to rise.

His head grew light as he raised himself a few inches, and the room suddenly appeared to move round and round, gradually increasing in velocity. Sid felt as if all strength had departed from him, for he fell back in the chair as limp as a wet rag.

He felt an irresistible desire to go to sleep. His eyes closed as though weighted with lead. His head fell upon the arm which lay across the chair, and the next moment he was as unconscious as a wooden image.

CHAPTER III.—Kidnaped.

Five minutes later Mr. Dicer walked into the room.

"He's dead to the world for the next twelve hours all right," he muttered in a tone of satisfaction. "Now to notify Golding that the first step in his scheme has been successfully accomplished, and then to get the boy aboard the steamer, which leaves for Cape Town, South Africa, in the morning at five o'clock."

The sporty man turned the gas low, locked the door on the unconscious Sidney Sherwood, and was presently in the cab once more, speeding toward Broadway. After a short ride the vehicle drew up before a gambling establishment on a side street off upper Broadway, and Mr. Dicer entered the place where he was well known.

Half an hour later he came out, accompanied by Henry Golding. They got into the cab which started back for the house where the boy still reclined in his chair—a victim of a certain drug.

"You've provided a South African outfit for the boy and sent it in a trunk to the steamer dock, you say," said Mr. Dicer.

"Yes," replied Golding.

"I'll have to provide my outfit when I get there," said the sporty man. "You'll send me a draft for 500 pounds in English money at once so that I'll get it by mail as soon as we reach Cape Town?"

"I will."

"And another draft for the same amount six months later."

"Of course. That is our agreement."

"The \$1,000 you have handed me to clinch our agreement will do me for a while. I can get some of it changed for English coin aboard the steamer, and the balance I'll turn into the currency of the country when I get there. When I get back a year from now I'm to receive the balance of the \$10,000 settled upon between us as the price of the job?"

"Certainly. You hold my signed agreement to that effect, so you need have no doubt about me coming up if you do your part. In fact, as I

have explained to you, everything depends on you keeping that boy away one year. If he should get back to this country in time to learn that he is Harper Golding's heir, conditionally on his marrying a certain young lady, why I'll lose my legacy, and you'll lose all that is coming to you, so it is to your interest to see that Sidney Sherwood stays away as long as his absence is necessary."

"I guess I'll have no trouble in that respect as long as he is not aware of the paragraph in his uncle's will. By the way who is the young lady he has to marry in order to get the money?"

"Never mind her, Dicer. She doesn't count as long as the boy is kept away."

"Oh, all right. It's nothing to me," replied the sporty man, indifferently.

Henry Golding made a fatal mistake when he declined to tell his fellow-conspirator the name of the girl, as the sequel will show.

As soon as the pair reached Dicer's room the sporty man began to pack up his trunk, which operation did not take him very long.

"In order to get the boy aboard the steamer without raising any suspicion as to his real condition I suppose you'll represent that he's under the influence of liquor," said Golding, regarding the senseless Sid with great satisfaction.

"Of course," chuckled Dicer. "I'll see that his breath smells like a distillery."

"Good. You're a clever fellow, Dicer. If you carry this business out all right, and I come in for half of my late uncle's estate, I'll give you a bonus of \$2,000 over and above the face of our agreement," said Golding.

"Will you?" replied his associate in the scheme. "I'll make it. If this boy returns to the United States inside of twelve months you can call me a bungler, and I'll forfeit whatever is coming to me."

"You will certainly forfeit it, for if I don't get half my uncle's property you can't get another dollar out of me. I hope you appreciate that fact."

"I see the point. As there will be \$4,000, plus the bonus of \$2,000, in the balance, I'm not going to take any chances if I can help myself."

"I hope not."

It was half-past nine when Mr. Dicer and Henry Golding carried Sid Sherwood out of the house to the cab. The driver then went to the sporty man's room and fetched down his trunk.

Leaving Golding in the vehicle with the drugged boy Mr. Dicer mounted beside the jehu, and off they started for the wharf in Brooklyn where the British steamer, Goliah, lay at her dock, all ready to haul out by daylight for her regular trip to South Africa.

Mr. Dicer had the two tickets in his pockets, and notwithstanding the shortness of the notice he had received, was ready to undertake the journey, for the sum of \$12,000, of which he had received \$1,000 down, was a temptation he couldn't let get by him. When the dock was reached Dicer went aboard to see the steward and find out where his stateroom was. It was pointed out to him.

"My young friend is intoxicated," he said to the steamer official. "He isn't used to strong liquor and he took several drops too much at the

dinner we gave in honor of our departure for a strange clime."

The steward smiled like a man who had seen many instances of inebriated passengers being brought aboard in an incapable way on the eve of sailing.

"He'll sleep it off in a few hours, and be all right by breakfast time," he said. "Do you want help to get him to the stateroom?"

"No; I brought a friend down with me to help me to get him aboard."

Mr. Dicer went ashore and he and Golding carried Sid to the stateroom and put him to bed. The two men then had a parting drink together, bade each other good-by, after which Golding stepped into the cab and was driven back to the gambling-house in New York. Dicer took possession of the lower berth in the stateroom, Sid having been stowed in the upper one, and turned in for the night.

When he woke up about eight the steamer Goliah was off Sandy Hook, headed southeast. He dressed himself in a leisurely manner and then went to breakfast. When he returned to the stateroom half an hour after Sid was still under the influence of the drug.

"He's good for an hour yet, I guess," said the sporty man to himself. "By that time we'll be out of sight of land. I'll go on deck and have a smoke."

After another look at the boy he left the room. In about three-quarters of an hour he came back and found Sid sitting up in his berth, looking blankly around his unfamiliar surroundings.

"Well, Sherwood, how do you feel?" asked Mr. Dicer, cheerfully. "Upon my word you look kind of rocky after your spree."

"Mr. Dicer, is that you?" asked the boy.

"It isn't anybody else, my dear fellow."

"What does this mean? I'm in bed with my clothes off, and this looks like the stateroom of some steamer."

"It is the stateroom of a steamer—the steamer Goliah."

"How came I here?"

"I brought you here in a cab last night after you signed the contract to go to South Africa with me."

"I don't know what you mean," replied Sid, looking bewildered.

"You remember I offered to take you to Africa with me in place of the boy I had engaged but who couldn't go, don't you?"

"Yes; you did make me the offer, and I said I would consider it. Then we went to your room so you could get a package to take to Mr. Harper Golding's house. That is all I remember."

"You'll remember the rest, I guess, when you get straightened out."

"Why should I need straightening out? What happened to me? I don't understand why things should be a blank to me between the time I entered your room and the present."

"The trouble is the whisky knocked you out."

"What whisky?"

"The whisky you drank in my room."

"Why, I never drank any whisky in my life."

"Maybe not till last night; but you did drink it pretty good after you got the taste of it in your mouth."

"Do you mean to say that I drank whisky in your room last night?"

"You certainly did. You refused it at first, and compromised on soda. Now soda is beastly stuff so I put a dash of whisky in it to neutralize it as it were. I went out of the room, leaving you with a book to look at. When I got back I must say I was astonished to see you filling up out of the whisky bottle—taking the liquor down like so much water."

Sid regarded the sporty man in sheer amazement, too astonished to say a word.

"When I kidded you about it, you laughed, told me to draw up the contract for Africa and you'd sign it. That suited me and so the matter was soon fixed up. We then had a couple rounds of drinks to ratify the agreement, and the result was you went off to sleep. Then I got word that the steamer was going to sail some hours ahead of her advertised time. As I couldn't afford to miss her it became a case of bustle. I called a cab, bundled you into it, hunted up a gent's furnishing store and bought you a trunk and an outfit that I judged would fit you, and finally reached the dock where the steamer lay. That was some hours ago, and now we're on our way."

"We're what?" gasped Sid, as much bewildered by the voluble statement of Mr. Dicer as he was with his unaccustomed surroundings.

"On our way."

"On our way where?"

"Why to South Africa, my dear fellow."

Sid at that moment became sensible of the steady rumble and jar of the big engines of the *Goliah*, which were working steadily as clock-work.

"Do you mean to say that we are at sea?"

"That's just where we are, my dear fellow. We left Brooklyn some four hours ago, and are now just out of sight of the coast. Get up and dress yourself. You'll just be in time for a late breakfast."

"Good laws!" exclaimed Sid, hardly able to believe the evidence of his senses. "At sea, and bound for South Africa. Surely I must be dreaming."

"Get down from your perch and cast your eyes through that open porthole. You'll see that you're not dreaming."

Sid sprang down and looked as directed.

His eyes took in a long through contracted view of shimmering water, with not a sign of land in sight.

It was true, then—he was at sea, and bound for a strange land.

"Great Scott! I don't understand this thing at all," he ejaculated, looking at Mr. Dicer in a kind of helpless way.

The sporty man only shrugged his shoulders and smiled cheerfully.

CHAPTER IV.—At Cape Town.

Mr. Dicer waited until Sid had dressed himself, and then he guided the still somewhat dazed boy to the dining-room, where a few late comers were eating their breakfast.

"There's the bill-of-fare," said the sporty man. "Order anything upon it that strikes you. They

give good feed aboard this boat, so you'll live like a king till we reach Cape Town, and it won't cost you a nickel."

Sid mechanically did as he was told and made a hearty meal.

Then he accompanied his companion on deck, feeling much better, but still puzzled about Mr. Dicer's assertion that he had actually been drunk the night before, and had been brought aboard the steamer in that condition.

He couldn't believe it, for he had a rooted objection to spirituous liquor.

The sporty man engaged him in conversation to keep his thoughts occupied, and from dwelling on the incidents of the previous evening.

It was not till after dinner that he got a chance to coolly sum up the situation by himself, and when he did he came to the conclusion that he had not been drunk at all, but hounded by his new acquaintance, who, for some unknown reason, had played this game upon him.

Having reached the most satisfactory explanation of the singular affair that was possible Sid's first intention was to have it out with Mr. Dicer.

On second thoughts he decided that it would only be a waste of argument.

He entertained no great regret at leaving New York if there was anything in the change for him, for he had no ties to hold him to the city, and was rather sick of his job in Jacob Street.

The only thing he felt disposed to kick about was the sudden and peculiar way in which he had been carried off.

Just why Mr. Dicer was so anxious to have him for a business companion he could not guess, but on the whole his curiosity as to the outcome of the matter somewhat reconciled him to the situation.

The sporty man seemed to be a sociable, easy-going associate, and though the boy felt a bit suspicious of him, after what had happened, still he could not say that he disliked the man.

Sid, being something of a philosopher, decided to make the best of things as he found them, for he certainly could not change them.

Mr. Dicer was pleased to death when he found the boy more tractable than he expected, and shook hands with himself over the prospect of annexing the \$12,000 he was to receive if everything went through all right.

He gave Sid a big game of talk about the circus company, he alleged he was connected with, and about the business he was going to Africa to transact, with such assistance as the boy might be called on to render.

He was such a smooth, convincing talker that Sid really believed he was telling the truth, and began to feel some interest in the part he would play in the business.

Thus at the end of a couple of days the boy ceased to consider the way he had been brought aboard the steamer, and began to enjoy the novelty of his new experience.

He got acquainted with the other passengers, of which there were perhaps thirty aboard, and as the weather continued delightful, things went on swimmingly with him.

Among the passengers was a boy about his own age named Dick Duncan, who was taking a sea voyage for his health in company with his private tutor.

Sid and he cottoned to one another right off.

That fact didn't worry Mr. Dicer any, in fact he rather liked it, for he found out that Duncan was slated to remain away from home for a year, and he figured that if the two boys became real chummy it would make his job of keeping Sid away from the United States for a year much lighter.

So he encouraged the acquaintance between them, and filled in his time with men of his own age, who found him a very sociable companion.

Sid told Dick about the business that was taking Mr. Dicer to Africa.

"So he's going to get a supply of wild animals for a circus?" said Dick.

"That's what he told me," answered Sid.

"Is he going to buy them or hunt for them?"

"Buy them, I guess."

"It would be great fun for you if he went hunting for some of them and took you along, as no doubt he would, since you're in his employ. How much does he pay you?"

"Ten dollars a week and all expenses."

"Do you get paid while you're aboard the steamer here?"

"I believe that is the arrangement."

"You have a snap. How came you to get the job?"

Mr. Dicer offered it to me at short notice, just before the steamer sailed," replied Sid, evasively, for he did not care to go into any particulars on the subject.

"I suppose you'll stay in Cape Town awhile?"

"I couldn't tell you anything about Mr. Dicer's arrangements after we get there. I'll have to go wherever he goes."

"Of course; but I like you, Sid, and it would suit me from the ground floor up to be with you as much as possible. You're an American like myself, and of course I'd rather have you to go around with than make up to any resident of Cape Town."

"Much obliged to you for saying so. The sentiment is reciprocated. We'll stand in together as long as circumstances will permit it. If Mr. Dicer and I have to do much traveling, you might persuade your tutor to accompany us, and so we could continue together."

"That's a bang-up idea. I'll talk to him about it. I don't see that it would make any particular difference to him. I was sent away to recuperate and enjoy myself, and I guess it doesn't make any difference where I go, as long as it isn't into any dangerous locality."

"If Mr. Dicer and I should go hunting for any wild animals, that would be too dangerous a sport probably for you to take part in," said Sid.

"It might, and it might not. It would be full of excitement, at any rate, and that would suit me first rate," said Dick, with sparkling eyes.

"It might not suit your tutor's ideas, and he's got charge of you."

"I might be able to talk him into it."

"No use speculating about it at present for I have no more idea than a baby what Mr. Dicer has on the books. And I probably won't learn till we reach Cape Town, for he seems disinclined to talk business till the time comes to buckle down. By the way, he thinks you're a capital chap, Dick, and advised me to cultivate your friendship."

"Did he really say that?" said Dick, in a pleased tone.

"He did for a fact. I have an idea that he believes we may see considerable of one another after we reach Africa."

"I hope we will," replied Dick, enthusiastically. "It won't be my fault if we don't."

The two boys became practically inseparable as the voyage continued, and Dick improved in health and strength every day, while the trip seemed to benefit Sid, as well.

Dick's tutor made no objection to their companionship, for he rather liked Sid's frank, good looking face, with its strength of character which had attracted the late Harper Golding more than anything else, and mainly contributed toward the altering of his will in favor of his younger nephew when he became disgusted with Henry Golding's questionable mode of life.

At last one sunny September morning, the first month of the South African spring, the steamer Goliath came to anchor in Table Bay, and the two boys gazed with equal wonder at the remarkable scene which met their view landward. Cape Town, the capital of Cape Colony, faces Table Bay to the northeast, is flanked by the mountain Lion's Head, with its continuation to Signal Hill, and has behind it the precipices of Table Mountain.

What first arrested the attention of the boys was on the breakwater, with the docks and patent slip, and then the castle with its outworks and bastions.

Then their gaze extended quite naturally to that remarkable elevation called Table Mountain, which was overhung with white festoons of clouds that formed the curious spectacle so well known in that country as "the tablecloth."

"Say, Dick, if that mountain doesn't look like a gigantic table with a cloth upon it, then I'm talking ragtime," said Sid, regarding the spectacle with both awe and admiration.

"It does for a fact, Sid. It seems like a wall of rock reaching right up to the heavens. It beats anything I ever saw in the way of a natural wonder, and I've seen a few of our mammoth American wonders," replied Dick.

There was a light vapor in the air which made it impossible for them to get a correct idea of their novel surroundings; but as the morning advanced this passed away, and then they grew enthusiastic over the grand sight before them.

They had little time now to dwell upon the scene, for the tugs were approaching to convey the passengers ashore.

"I hope we go to the same hotel," said Dick.

"I suppose you'll put up at the best one," replied Sid. "It's my opinion a second or third-class one will suit Mr. Dicer best. Probably he had been recommended to one patronized by show people who come to Cape Town."

"I'd sooner go where you go, Sid, even if it is a third-class house," said Dick.

"You'll have to go where your tutor takes you. He probably has instructions to put up at the best hotels while you and he are abroad, and as your father foots the bills, why he isn't going to take in cheap accommodations just to please your fancy for being with me. It won't make a bit of difference that I can see if we don't stay at the same hotel. I can call on you, or you on me,

as often as circumstances will permit," said Sid.

By the time the clock in the Government House tower rang out the hour of ten, the passengers from the steamer Goliah were landed at one of the docks.

Once again on dry land, Sid and Dick turned their backs upon the broad expanse of Table Bay, upon whose placid bosom rested steamers and sailing vessels of many nationalities, though chiefly British, and turned their attention to the town itself, which is built upon a double slope, and subsides into a plain beyond.

As they followed Mr. Dicer and Dick's tutor, whose name was Clarke, away from the water front, they noticed that the streets, at right angles to each other, were lined with houses for the most part of an Eastern type, with heavy walls and flat roofs, interspersed with increasing numbers of warehouses and shops, of the sort to be met with in England.

After a short walk Mr. Dicer came to a stop at a street corner.

"This is where we part company for the present," he said. "We shall put up at the Britannia Inn, half a block away, Sid. Your friend and Mr. Clarke are going to the Royal George Hotel, a few blocks further on. Make your arrangements to see one another again and then follow me."

"Shall I call on you, Sid?" asked Dick, as they shook hands.

"If you like. You probably will have more time than I will from this out. Drop around this afternoon some time. If Mr. Dicer hasn't any use for my services we'll take a look around town together."

"All right. I'll be around after dinner. Look out for me."

"I will. Good-by."

So the boys parted and Sid accompanied Mr. Dicer to the Britannia Inn, a clean and comfortable caravansary of the third class, to which the sporty man had been recommended by the steamer's steward.

Mr. Dicer secured a large room with a small bedroom connecting.

The latter he allotted to Sid, and the boy would have to pass through the large room to reach it or leave it, which struck the sporty man as an advantageous arrangement.

"I'm going to one or two of the shops to make some purchases," said Mr. Dicer. "I'll be back before dinner time. Sit here on the veranda and I'll know where to find you when I return."

The sporty man walked off, leaving Sid to amuse himself as best he could with the sights that were within reach of his line of vision.

CHAPTER V.—From the Frying Pan Into the Fire.

About an hour after Sid came out from dinner Dick appeared at the inn and spied him seated on the veranda.

"Hello, old man, I see you've turned up," said Sid, in a tone of satisfaction.

"Surest thing you know. I said I would, and I always keep my word," replied Dick.

"Have any trouble in finding your way here?"

"Not a bit. My bump of locality is largely

developed, I've been told, so I'm not easily lost in a strange place. It's easy to get around this town, for the streets appear to be quite regularly laid out. All you need to know is the name or number of the place you want to reach, and a few inquiries will land you there all right. Where's Mr. Dicer?"

"Playing pool in the barroom. Are you ready to take a stroll; if you are, I'll go in and tell him I'm going off a while with you," said Sid.

"I'm ready whenever you are," responded Dick.

Mr. Dicer had no objection to Sid going around with his new friend, and so the boys went off together, and spent the whole of the afternoon exploring the town.

Whatever business the sporty man had on hand during the week that followed he had no occasion to call on Sid's services, much to that lad's surprise.

"So far this job of mine seems to be a sinecure," he told Dick. "I haven't done a single thing yet to earn my wages and expenses. Probably I'll make up for it later, for surely Mr. Dicer didn't pay my way to South Africa merely to enjoy a small portion of my society."

"There's a British man-o'-war down the bay. She's just arrived, I was told, from Calcutta. Let's hire a sailboat and go down and see her. Perhaps they'll let us come aboard," suggested Dick.

"I'm no sailor. Do you know how to manage a boat?"

"Bet your life I do. I belong to the Mermaid Boat Club of New York, and I own a sloop-yacht that I have sailed with friends ever so many times. I've gone up the Sound and around into Gardiner's Bay to Shelter Island in her on a pretty rough day, so I guess you can trust your life with me on a sunshiny afternoon like this, even if I'm not familiar with the navigation of Table Bay."

"I'm ready to go. I'll leave word with the clerk of the house to tell Mr. Dicer, if he asks for me, where we have gone."

Half an hour later they were seated in a small but well-built sailboat, spinning down the sunlit bay under the influence of a smacking land breeze.

They reached the warship in due time, but were ordered by a sentry to keep off.

That was hint enough that they would not be permitted to come aboard.

"Well, what'll we do now, Sid? No use going back yet a while. Let's go out to the entrance of the bay. Looks safe enough to risk," said Dick.

"Whatever you say goes with me, old man. I can't find any fault with the way you handle this craft. You seem to be an expert."

So they kept on, which they wouldn't have done had they been familiar with the sudden changes in the weather conditions that take place in that neighborhood.

As they drew near the entrance of the big bay the wind suddenly dropped and left them becalmed, and at the mercy of a strong ebb tide, which was setting straight out to sea.

"This is hard luck, and something I didn't count on," said Dick.

"We seem to be drifting off shore fast," said Sid.

"We are, unfortunately, but I'm in hopes the

wind will spring up from the southward and give us a good run back to town."

"Looks misty in the direction we're going," said Sid.

"That's a fact, and it's a feature I don't like. I've heard of these sea mists that crawl up on one before you know where you are, and then you find yourself in as bad a predicament as if you were lost in a fog in the British Channel."

"We can't do anything to help ourselves as far as I can see."

"Not a thing. The boat is bossing the situation now."

While they talked the sea mist came steadily on, and soon the land behind them began to look unreal and indistinct as the mist acted on the atmosphere between them and the shore.

Like a slowly dissolving view Table Mountain and the rest of the cape vanished from their sight, leaving them adrift on the trackless sea without a compass to guide them.

The boys now realized that their situation was decidedly serious.

Not knowing what to expect next, Dick prudently took a couple of reefs in the mainsail, which hung limp and motionless in the calm.

At length the dim air began to darken, a sign that the sun was getting close to the horizon.

"Night seems to be coming on," said Sid, a bit anxiously. "If we don't turn up for dinner at our respective hotels Mr. Dicer and Mr. Clarke will wonder where we are keeping ourselves."

"As I judge we're all of ten miles off shore now, we couldn't reach our hotels in time for dinner ever if a fresh breeze turned up at once, and we knew the way right in to the harbor."

"The way in is behind us, isn't it?" said Sid. "We've drifted straight out."

"No. We've been slipping toward the west as well as to the south. I've lost the bearings of the bay altogether."

"That's cheerful. Here it is coming on night, we are maybe ten miles from land, in a dead calm, surrounded by a mist, and not a thing to eat. I don't fancy this adventure much."

"Neither do I, but we've got to grin and bear it."

Another hour passed, then, without notice, a gale broke upon them, coming from the south.

The sailboat heeled over, and flew northward like a frightened bird skimming the surges.

The water came in so fast that while Dick managed the helm Sid had a continuous job of bailing before him.

The mist vanished before the wind, but as it was now night the boys had no idea where they were, nor whither they were being carried.

All night the gale blew fiercely, and only Dick's expertness, and the stanchness of the little boat, kept them afloat.

They were thoroughly exhausted when morning dawned and the storm dropped away to a smart breeze almost as suddenly as it had come on.

They were now nearly 100 miles north of Cape Town, in the neighborhood of Cape St. Martin, and though land was out of sight to them in the little boat it could have been made out from the deck of a ship.

Taking the rising sun for a guide Dick headed northeast, believing that they were southwest of Cape Town.

This course would not have brought them in

sight of land for several days at the rate the boat progressed, though they were not actually ten miles from the coast.

As the morning grew apace the boys became famished, for neither of them had eaten anything since noon of the preceding day.

"This is something fierce," said Sid, at length, after a spell of silence.

"I agree with you. We put ourselves in a pretty bad hole when we started down the bay to take a look at that warship."

"I wouldn't care if there was something to eat aboard. Even dry bread would be worth chewing on if we had any."

"If I was only sure I'm steering the straight course to bring us into Cape Town I'd feel encouraged with the thought of a square meal at the end of the sail."

"If you aren't sure, then we may not strike land all day. I wonder if we can hold out till night again without eating?"

"That depends on—hello! There's a sail astern of us, coming up fast. We'll run alongside of her and ask for something to eat. And we'll also get our right course for Cape Town," said Dick, with new animation.

"By George! That's fine. With grub, a correct course, and this fine day we ought to have no trouble getting out of our scrape," said Sid, encouragingly.

"That's right," nodded Dick.

They watched the approach of the small, rakish-looking schooner with all the impatience of hungry stomachs.

She came on pretty fast, but not fast enough for the boys, who earnestly wished she had wings instead of sails.

Inside of half an hour she was close at hand.

Nearly a dozen people to be made out on her deck, most of them thinly clad and dark as a pot of blacking.

The whole bunch were looking curiously at the small sailboat and the two boy occupants.

Dick had brought the boat up in the wind and she lay to waiting for the larger craft to reach her.

The man at the helm easily saw that the boys wanted to hold communication with the schooner, so he ran close up to the sailboat.

A sunburned man, who was probably the skipper of the craft, shouted:

"Beat ahoy! What do you want?"

"We belong to Cape Town. We got caught in a dead calm yesterday afternoon while sailing near the entrance to Table Bay and drifted out to sea. About dark a heavy gale came on and blew us out of reckoning. We want something to eat, and are prepared to pay for it. We also want the correct course for Cape Town."

The skipper turned to the helmsman and held a short pow-wow with him.

Both men looked hard at the boys and the sailboat while talking together.

Finally the skipper called out:

"Run under our stern and pitch us a line."

"Go forward, Sid, and when I put the bows close aboard that craft toss the mooring rope to him."

This maneuver was carried out, and the skipper of the schooner made the line fast to a cleat in his deck.

Then he pulled the sailboat close up telling Dick to lower his sail.

"I guess they want us to come aboard," said Dick. "I wouldn't be surprised if they are bound in for Cape Town and mean to give us a tow."

"That will suit us all right," replied Sid, who didn't care in what manner he reached the end of his journey, for he had enough of sailing to last him for some time to come.

"Come aboard," said the skipper, curtly, when the bows of the sailboat came close to the schooner's quarter.

Sid sprang on the vessel's deck and Dick followed him.

"Who are you chaps?" asked the skipper, curiously.

The boys told their names.

"You don't look like English boys."

"We're not. We are Americans."

"Employed in Cape Town?"

"I'm not," replied Dick. "I'm traveling for my health but my friend here is employed after a fashion."

"You look hungry."

"Bet your life we're hungry. We can eat 'most anything after our long fast."

"And you're willing to pay for grub?"

"Yes. Give us a square meal each and take it out of that," and Dick fished a glittering sovereign (equivalent to nearly \$5 of American money) out of his pocket and tendered it to the skipper.

The man's eyes snapped as he took the money.

"Got any more like this about you?" he asked, inquisitively.

"I guess that'll more than pay for all we can eat," replied Dick. "By the way, are you bound for Cape Town?"

"Yes," answered the skipper, with a shifty look.

"Give us a tow, then, and keep the sovereign for pay."

The skipper turned on his heel and shouted to one of the blacks who formed his crew an order in a language strange and uncouth to the boys.

"Come down in the cabin," he said, looking at Dick. "You chaps shall have a meal presently."

"That's the way to talk," replied Dick, in a tone of satisfaction, as he followed the man, and Sid came close behind his friend.

The boys found the cabin nothing to brag about. It was very small—just large enough to hold a narrow table, with a chair at either end, screwed to the floor, and a bunk on either side of the table with room enough for one man to pass between at a time.

It was also dark, dingy and ill-smelling.

"Sit down," said the skipper, pointing at the chairs, while he sat on one of the bunks.

The boys obeyed.

"So you're traveling for your health?" he said to Dick, with a disagreeable smile.

"Yes, sir."

"With your parents?"

"No. My tutor."

"Where are your parents?"

"In New York City."

"Got lots of money, I suppose?"

Dick didn't like his inquisitiveness, so he said:

"My father works for all he has."

"What business is he in?"

"He is a banker on Wall Street."

The skipper's eyes twinkled at the answer.

"Are your parents well off, too?" he asked Sid.

"No. My parents are dead. They never were well off. I have always worked for a living," replied the boy.

The skipper looked disappointed.

Just then a black man entered with a plate of brownish looking bread, and another well filled with a good-sized fried fish.

He placed them on the table and retired.

He soon returned with two cups of hot coffee, freshly made, and a plate with a big dab of soft, white butter, somewhat resembling lard.

"Pitch in," said the skipper. "If there ain't enough there you can have more."

"There's more than enough for us," replied Dick, as he and Sid made a simultaneous swoop at the fish, which made their mouths water to look at.

The skipper favored them with another of his crafty grins, and gaetting up strode on deck.

"That fish is all right," mumbled Sid, with his mouth full.

"Geel! It tastes good. And ain't I hungry?" said Dick. There was little of the fish left but the bones when the boys had finished, and not a slice of bread remained on the plate.

The black brought them each a second cup of coffee, and after swallowing that they went on deck.

They looked around and saw a low line of coast on their right.

Of course that was Africa.

It extended up and down as far as they could see.

Cape Town they figured lay to the south and the schooner was sailing northward.

"I thought you said you were going to Cape Town?" said Dick, walking up to the skipper, followed by Sid. "You're sailing north up the coast. If you're not going to the Cape we'll have to part company with you now and take to our boat."

The skipper grinned.

"Cape Town is a hundred miles away—too far for you boys to sail in that craft. I'm bound for the Orange River, and I'll take you with me."

"But that's taking us a long distance from our destination. We'll take the chances of getting back to the Cape in our boat. If you'll lay to we'll go aboard of her and bid you good-by. You're welcome to the sovereign and all we'll ask for is a couple of loaves of your bread."

"Sorry, young chaps, but I've made up my mind to take you with me. I've taken a fancy to you both, therefore we don't part company so soon."

"But we don't want to go any further north," protested Dick.

The skipper smiled in an ugly way.

"You'll go where I say," he said harshly. "You have nothing to say about the matter whatever. Some day, maybe, you will get back to Cape Town, but that will be as I please. For the present you are in my power and will remain so. Understand?"

His meaning was clear and the two boys gasped with consternation.

CHAPTER VI.—On the Orange River.

"What right have you to detain us aboard your vessel?" demanded Sid angrily, as soon as he recovered from his surprise.

"I take the right," replied the skipper, coolly.

"If you don't let us go, you'll regret it, I can tell you that."

"Bah! I know my business."

"What in thunder is your object in keeping us prisoners in your hands?"

"To make money out of this young gentleman," laying his hand on Dick's shoulder. "You I care nothing about, but I must keep you to protect myself."

"How do you expect to make money out of me?" asked Dick, uneasily.

"Your parents are rich. I shall hold you for a ransom. You shall write a letter to your tutor telling him that he must send to your father for 5,000 pounds, that is \$25,000 in your money, to secure your release, and that of your friend. The man who delivers your letter will state where the money is to be handed over."

"I won't write such a letter," replied Dick, defiantly.

The skipper shrugged his shoulders.

"We will talk of that another time," he said, turning away.

"We put our foot into it coming aboard this pirate craft," said Sid to Dick, in a tone of disgust. "This is as bad as some of the kidnaping jobs that have taken place in our own country. The skipper of this schooner is an old rascal. I didn't like his face from the first. Still I don't see how we could help falling into the trap, since we had to have something to eat, and the only way we could get it was by accepting his invitation to come aboard."

"It can't be helped. We must try to escape."

"Of course. We're not going to stand for this kind of thing if we can help it."

"He says he's going to take us to the Orange River. That's several hundred miles from Cape Town. It's a long river, and forms the northern boundary of Cape Colony. The question is what part of the river is he going to take us to?"

"Probably somewhere near the coast. We must watch our chance and give him the slip."

"I should imagine it is a wild country, and unless we can secure our sailboat so as to return by water we'll have a hard time trying to get back to town."

"We may make up our minds that we'll be closely watched. Probably some of these black rascals aboard will be bailed to keep their eyes on us all the time."

"This unfortunate cruise we took had gone from bad to worse. My father and mother, not to speak of Mr. Clarke, would have a fit if they knew the predicament I'm in."

"I have nobody to worry over me. Mr. Dicer hasn't any particular interest in me, for I am nothing to him. He'll simply have to get a new assistant if I fail to show up. If he could leave Cape Town before we get back I'll be stranded in Africa; and that will be pretty serious for me."

"Don't worry. I'll see you through, old man."

"Thanks for your offer; but it wouldn't be fair

for you to lay out any money on me. Besides Mr. Clarke might object, and he's the purse-bearer."

"Do you suppose I'd desert you when we are chums? Well, I guess not."

"Let us hope things won't get as bad as that with me. I appreciate your generous offer, and won't forget it."

"Let us get back to the subject that concerns us most at present. I judge it will take this schooner a couple of days to reach the Orange River. Now our boat is towing astern. If we get half a chance we must try and get aboard of her in the night, cut loose and sail back for Cape Town."

"I'm game to do anything that spells escape. As we're close in to the coast, I dare say we'll be able to pick up enough to eat on the way."

"We'll chance that. Any risk is better than letting this rascal hold the upper hand on us."

The boys stood well out of earshot of the skipper and his helmsman while they were talking together.

The two men paid no attention to them, but conversed together in low tones at the stern.

Noon time came and dinner was served in the cabin to the skipper.

When he was through he relieved the man at the helm and that worthy had his dinner.

Then a black man came up to the boys and asked them if they wanted more to eat.

The chap spoke a kind of broken English, but he easily made himself understood.

Sid shook his head and continued to converse with Dick.

The afternoon wore away and supper was in order about dark.

The boys were hungry again by that time and did not refuse an invitation to the meal.

An hour after dark they were ordered forward into the quarters of the negro crew, where two bunks were pointed out to them.

The skipper told them that if they poked their noses out of the hatch during the night they would be tossed overboard, and they found that one of the negroes stood watch to see that they obeyed orders and remained below.

The long and the short of it was during the two days and a half they remained on board the schooner they found no chance to give the craft and its rascally skipper the slip, and the vessel finally reached and entered the mouth of the Orange River.

That event happened about sundown, and during the night she continued on her course up the river till daybreak when she came to anchor opposite a native settlement.

When the boys came on deck in the morning they found themselves at their destination.

They breakfasted with the skipper.

"Now, young fellows, I'm going to take you ashore," he said, when the meal was over. "You're about 400 miles from Cape Town, and here you will stay until I get that 5,000 pounds I spoke of. The sooner you write that letter," he said, looking at Dick, "the sooner you and your friend will get free if the money is paid. If it isn't paid within a reasonable time then I'll take other means of disposing of you. You had better mention that fact in your letter, and give your tutor to understand that if the money is not forthcoming you'll never get back to your country, either of you. Once you're sent into the interior

you'll be passed from tribe to tribe until you get so far from civilization that your chances of ever seeing white people again will be mighty small. Now you know what you have to expect if you are not ransomed."

The skipper evidently meant every word he said, and the boys looked glum over the prospect ahead of them.

They were informed that they would be kept under guard while at the settlement on the river, and that even were they to escape they would never be able to find their way through the country that lay between them and the nearest town.

The skipper having said all he had to say to them, they were ordered into a boat and rowed to the landing by a couple of the black crew, the skipper going with them.

They were marched through the main street of the little village to a large building of one long story used as a storehouse by the skipper of the schooner, who carried on an extensive trading business with the natives of the interior.

The building was divided into sections to accommodate the different commodities, such as: ivory, bar-wood, palm-oil, and divers other articles brought by the blacks to exchange for goods they needed or took a fancy to.

Captain Sombrero had been in the trading business for many years and knew what he could barter for the products of Africa and make anywhere from five hundred to a thousand per cent. profit.

He was a man well fitted for the business, for he seemed to have been born without a conscience, or had lost it in the shuffle of life.

One of his chief regrets was the fact that slave trading was no longer in vogue, as he was peculiarly suited for the business.

He often looked longingly at the stalwart, healthy negroes with whom he came in contact, and mentally figured what a profitable live cargo they would make if they could be disposed of as in the days of yore before public opinion broke up the trade.

When he came across the two boys, in their stout craft, a hundred miles out of their course, and found they were comparative strangers to Africa, and that one of them was the son of wealthy American parents, he saw the chance of making a good haul by holding that particular youth for ransom.

As for Sid Sherwood, while there was nothing in him, still it was necessary, on the score of prudence, to hold on to him, too.

Being the boss of the village he could do as he pleased there.

He was the great man of the place, and the natives obeyed his smallest order with the docility of dogs broken to harness.

Captain Sombrero had the utmost contempt for boys, not believing they had the nerve or the ability to make any great noise in the world.

He sized Sid and Dick up as on the par with the average youth, and that is where he made a mistake.

He did not think it necessary to shackle them in any way, for he was confident that, in the first place, they couldn't break out of the wooden shed where he was going to confine them, although it was not constructed to hold prisoners; and in the next place, if they did break out, it would be im-

possible for them to elude the attention of the villagers.

But even if they did both these things it would be impossible, in his opinion, for them to get very far from the village in that strange country before they would be overhauled and brought back again.

These facts he laid before them on the way from the landing to the building in order to impress on their minds the futility of any attempt to escape from him.

The boys listened to him, but while they realized that their situation was tough in the extreme, they did not give up hope of getting away.

They were marched into the storehouse and left standing in the main room, under the watchful eyes of a couple of blacks, while Captain Sombrero looked into the different compartments to determine which would be most suitable as an abiding place for his youthful prisoners.

Finally he selected the one containing a few long elephant tusks of rough ivory.

His store of that material was rather low, for it came in but slowly, owing to the scarcity of elephants in that part of the country, and the fact that what he did get came from a long distance.

So into that compartment the boys were forced to march, and later on they were provided with a couple of stools, a small deal table, several other things, and a well-worn greasy pack of cards to while away the hours of their captivity.

The door was closed on them and a padlock affixed to it.

Captain Sombrero decided that the padlock was better than a guard on the inside, and that the outer wall was strong enough to answer for a guard outside, so he dispensed with that precaution as unnecessary, believing that his prisoners would continue under the impression that they were guarded as he had told them.

CHAPTER VII.—In the Storehouse.

"Well, here we are, two free American boys, locked up like negro slaves on the benighted soil of South Africa. It's enough to make a fellow mad," said Dick, with a look of disgust, glancing about the small compartment, every board of which had a wide crack between itself and its neighbor to let in light and air.

"It certainly is an outrage," admitted Sid; "but as there isn't any good of kicking we must devote our energies to the more profitable occupation of trying to get out on the quiet."

"That's easier said than done, I guess," returned Dick. "These boards, although not close together, look as if they were put up to stay. Then there is the guard the skipper mentioned to watch that we don't get out, and as the blacks are strong, hearty looking fellows, they would be able to make short work of us."

"Oh, we may be able to overcome these difficulties," replied Sid hopefully.

"Well, suppose we do get out, we are four hundred miles from Cape Town, according to the skipper, and walking isn't good, not to speak of the other difficulties we must encounter, including this river which we would have to cross to start with."

"We're not such a great way from the coast. We would make our way there first of all, and then beat it down till we came to a town, of which there are several between this and the Cape."

"Of course we'd do that. We couldn't very well make our way through the interior of the country, where we'd run against the Bushmen and other natives, who would be likely to handle two lone chaps like us without gloves."

"If we could regain possession of our boat our escape would be much easier," said Sid. "That's the point I would aim for; but if we couldn't get hold of it we would have to follow the plan I spoke of, and make for the coast on foot."

The boys continued to talk the matter over for some time, as it was the subject they were most interested in.

Finally the door was opened and a stalwart black man brought them their dinner.

It consisted of a species of meat, the nature of which in its cooked state the boys were unfamiliar with, but they afterward found out that it was stewed monkey; two small fish; bread similar to what had been served to them aboard the schooner; part of a pineapple, and a gourd filled with a sweet liquor, not unlike weak wine.

"What kind of stew do you call this?" said Dick, looking at the compound a bit suspiciously.

"How should I know?" replied Sid. "It must be part of some animal belonging to this country. It's safe enough to eat it, for Captain Sombrero has no intention of poisoning us I should judge. It isn't bad," he added, after tasting it.

"I always like to know what I'm eating," said Dick.

"You can't always be sure of that in a New York restaurant," laughed Sid.

"So I've heard; but I'm not in the habit of eating at cheap restaurants."

"Oh, my remark applies to swell ones, and hotels as well."

Dick was prevailed on to try the stew, and he liked it so well that he got away with his full share without a murmur.

"I wonder what kind of vintage this liquor is?" said Dick. "Tastes something like sweetened water with a dash of Burgundy in it."

"It's a native drink of some kind. I never drank any Burgundy, or any other wine, in fact. That's where you have the advantage of me. This is unfermented stuff, and a gallon of it wouldn't make a chap tipsy."

On the whole the meal was perfectly satisfactory to the boys, and they felt better after eating it.

"It's three days now since we took that sail down the bay. I'm afraid Mr. Clarke thinks we upset the sailboat and were drowned. He'll be all broke up over the matter. It will break his heart to have to cable the news of my supposed death to my father, and I hate like thunder to feel that he will probably do it if he doesn't hear from us pretty soon," said Dick.

"I sympathize with you, old chap, for the news will be a terrible shock to your parents. I'm glad I've nobody to worry about me," said Sid.

While the boys were at dinner they became conscious that they were objects of great curiosity to a horde of naked negro kids, who gathered along the outside wall of that part of the building and gazed at them through the wide

cracks, just as civilized children would do at some new species of animal in its cage.

This inspection annoyed the boys at first, and so did the chatter of the kids, who were doubtless making comments on the prisoners, but there was no way of escaping from it, so they ceased to notice the frisky urchins.

After a while they were left alone and then they began to examine the walls of their prison pen, with the object of trying to discover some weak spot.

They were not successful.

The boards were good and stanch, and they had no implement that would make any impression on them.

"As far as the walls are concerned we're up against it," said Sid. "We can't break through them. We're safe enough here without a guard to watch us."

"Then we're booked to remain after all," said Dick dolefully.

"We haven't tried the roof yet. Maybe we could make a hole in it. We'll try tonight," said Sid.

"The roof looks as if it was a mere thatch," said Dick more hopefully. "We can climb up on one of those cross-pieces close to the corner after dark and see what impression we can make in it."

"That's what we'll do. Probably the skipper didn't think we'd do any stunt like that. It would give me a whole lot of satisfaction to show him that American boys are not so easily overcome by difficulties as he may think," said Sid.

The coming of dark brought their supper, and after that had been eaten, Captain Sombrero appeared with his customary evil smile.

"How do you like your new quarters?" he asked.

"As well as can be expected under the circumstances," answered Sid.

"It depends on your friend and his father how long you two remain here," went on the captain of the trading schooner. "If you write that letter in the morning, young man," looking at Dick, "I'll send a messenger to Cape Town with it to the address you put on it. That will take maybe five or six days. If your tutor cables my demand to New York it will reach there in a few hours. Your father will then, no doubt, cable to one of the Cape Town banks to pay the sum necessary to secure your freedom. As soon as the money is paid over to my agent in town, word will be sent to me, and then I will see that you and your companion are sent in your boat to the Cape. Altogether this matter oughtn't to take over three weeks, or a month at the outside."

"You're a nice rascal to hold us up in this way," said Dick, indignantly.

"I never let a good thing escape me," grinned the skipper.

"No, I suppose not. You look like it," replied Dick, sarcastically.

"Shall I bring pen, ink and paper to you tomorrow morning so that we can close this matter up as soon as possible?"

"Yes, you can bring them. It will be some satisfaction for me to let my tutor know that I'm alive."

"Very good," said Captain Sombrero, in a tone

of satisfaction. "I wish you both a good night's rest and pleasant dreams."

"Where do we sleep—on the floor?" asked Sid.

"Oh, no. A couple of my blacks will bring you in a mattress from the house at once. You don't need any covering in this climate."

"I should say not. We're roasted already."

The mattress, an old one filled with dried vegetation, was soon introduced into the place, and once more the boys were left alone. The skipper had taken away the lantern he brought with him so they were in the dark, but the gloom was not intense, for it was quite bright outside, although the moon was not up.

The boys decided to wait till things were thoroughly quiet in the vicinity before beginning operations on the inside of the thatched roof.

"It's too bad it's so bright outside," said Dick. "If there really is a watch set on us we'll be seen getting out through the roof in case we're lucky enough to make a hole large enough to get through."

"Why worry about that? I don't believe there's any one on the watch. I think that was just a bluff on the skipper's part to intimidate us against making any effort to escape. If the roof is strong this place will hold us without the necessity of a watch. Your willingness to write that letter to Mr. Clarke tomorrow morning will give Captain Sombrero the idea that we have no thoughts of attempting an immediate escape. That's where, it's to be hoped, we'll fool him."

After waiting an hour or more the boys got busy. Sid took the initiative, and climbed up on the beam that helped support the roof. As soon as he was seated he began to dig at the hatch with his jack-knife.

He soon found that he could make good headway, and notified Dick to that effect.

The thatch soon began falling in a shower of small particles, and inside of fifteen minutes Sid had made a hole big enough to thrust his arm through.

"I'll make a hole in an hour big enough to let us through," said Sid from his perch. "If the coast is clear we'll stand a good chance of getting off."

He worked away with great energy refusing to let Dick help him out.

"What's the use?" he said. "I'm not tired. I can keep this up for an hour."

And he did, rapidly enlarging the hole until it was plenty big enough for him to stick his head out, which he did. He had a clear view of the neighborhood now. The huts of the village lay scattered all around the place, while to the right was a two-story dwelling which he presumed was the skipper's quarters when ashore.

The starlit sky made the scene look very bright and clear, and Sid regarded the light as the chief obstacle they would have to contend with in getting safely away. Everything was quiet, however. As far as he could see there was nobody on watch. After taking in the outside situation he resumed his work on the hole, which became much easier as he proceeded. Finally he judged that the hole was amply large enough to admit of them passing through without difficulty.

"Everything is ready now for us to make a

sneak of it, Dick," he said. "Come up, and follow me to the ground."

As Dick started to climb up he pulled himself, out on the roof. There he waited till his friend joined him.

It was an easy matter for them to reach the ground, and then they walked cautiously to the corner of the storehouse and peeped around it. There was nothing in sight to alarm them, so they went on to the next corner, which commanded a view of the front, and also of the river. Here, if any place, they expected to find the watcher, but there was none.

"Things seem to be coming our way," said Sid. "If we do get away what a mad skipper Captain Sombrero will be in the morning."

To reach the river side where the schooner lay, with the sailboat still attached to her stern, they had to pass down the main and only street of the village. If there were any wakeful ones in that direction they could not help being seen. After a moment's hesitation they sallied forth from the shadow of the storehouse, stepping as lightly as possible over the hard, well-trodden ground. They prudently refrained from talking lest the sound of their voices should betray them. It was a ticklish walk, for so much depended on reaching the river without discovery. It was accomplished, however, successfully, and then the boys breathed freer. They could not reach the sailboat without boarding the schooner first, and as the crew were doubtless aboard, sleeping in the fore-castle forward, they had to be particularly careful. Sid stepped aboard first, and Dick glided after him. They made their way aft.

"Pull in the boat," whispered Sid, "while I untie the line."

Dick obeyed, but found it a hard job, for the tide was setting strong up the river, which was the contrary direction to the course they'd have to follow to reach the coast. Just as the bow of the boat was brought up to the schooner's quarter, and Sid had cast off the line, a black face and a pair of burly shoulders suddenly appeared up the short companionway from the cabin. He uttered a shout and then jabbering like a big monkey he sprang at the boys.

CHAPTER VIII.—In Fresh Trouble.

"The fat's in the fire," cried Sid, excitedly. "Hold on to the rope, Dick, or we'll be retaken."

As the black reached out to grab Sid, who was nearest to him, the boy handed him a regular knockout smash on the chin. The negro staggered back and fell down the companionway.

"Now's our chance. We've got to be lively, Dick," he said.

He jumped on the bow of the sailboat, and catching a cleat with his toes, and the stern of the schooner with his hands, told Dick to spring aboard. Dick did so, and the boat began to pull away.

Sid held on, however, but he couldn't let go without going overboard head first.

"Grab me, Dick, or I'll be into the river the moment I loose my hold," he said.

Dick perceived his dilemma, and twining the

line twice around his waist made it fast, then stepped back and pulled on it hard, telling Sid to let go. As the boat glided away with the tide they both went sprawling on the bows, Dick narrowly saving himself from going overboard. By that time the black man who had detected them at the critical moment was up on deck again, making Rome howl. The crew of half a dozen or more negroes came tumbling on deck to find out the cause of the rumpus. As soon as the boys recovered their legs, they started to hoist the sail, but by the time they had accomplished the maneuver the boat was several hundred yards astern of the schooner, which they had to pass to make the mouth of the river. Dick rushed to the helm and got the boat under control.

Dick headed down the river and kept the boat toward the side opposite the village and the schooner. By that time the racket made by the crew of the trading vessel had aroused not only the villagers, but Captain Sombrero as well. One of his blacks ran to his house and told him about the escape of the two boys.

He was dumfounded at the news and could hardly believe it. He aroused his white associate and they both came rushing down to the landing. The blacks aboard, in the meanwhile, had gone into the schooner's quarter boat, which they had unshipped from its fastenings on deck, and shoved overboard, and were rowing as hard as they could across the river to intercept the sailboat. The little craft made such slow headway against wind and tide that the boys saw that if they kept on they must surely be overhauled by the blacks, who were numerous enough to overpower them if they once got alongside.

"We'll have to give it up, old chap," said Sid, in a tone of intense regret. "We have got to turn around and sail up the river to avoid being retaken."

Dick agreed with him, and at once tacked the boat. She swung around like a bird, and darted off in the opposite direction, leaving the disappointed blacks far astern in a few minutes.

"The skipper has got us cornered in the river, and will keep a sharp lookout that we don't slip by when the tide changes," said Sid. "He'll also organize pursuit without delay, probably sending a party of blacks up on each side of the river to catch us if we land, and he, no doubt, will come up in the schooner's boat himself. We are surely in for a lively time of it."

"I'm afraid we are. The further we have to go up the river the further we will be getting from Cape Town by water, and that seems to be the only way we can cover the distance with certainty and comparative dispatch."

"Well, it can't be helped. That black rascal, by coming on us so unexpectedly, put a spoke in our wheels," replied Sid. "Only for him we'd be making for the mouth of the river now in safety."

The boys might outstrip the skipper by keeping on straight ahead, but this course threatened all manner of difficulties. They had no food and would be obliged to land at some village to get some. How they would be received was a problem. The only way they would be able to make their wants known would be by the sign lan-

guage, unless they found a native who could talk English. Even though they met with good luck still they were cut off from the ocean route to the Cape, and to try to make Cape Town by land, across a 400-mile stretch of country that was thoroughly unfamiliar to them, looked too desperate an undertaking for them to attempt except as a last resort.

A turn in the river soon hid the village and the schooner from their sight.

There was no sign of life along either bank as far as they could make out.

"We are sailing into the wilderness," said Dick.

"With no very cheerful prospect ahead as far as we know," returned Sid.

"And certain capture behind us if we venture back. We are certainly having a strenuous time. If I ever get back to New York I'll have a lot to tell about what happened to me in South Africa."

Both wind and tide slackened up after a while and their progress became slower.

The further they went the more anxious they became about the future.

"There's no use of us both keeping awake all night," said Sid. "You'd better let me steer a while—I guess I can do it all right in this stream—and turn in for a short snooze. I'll call you when I think you've slept enough to give me a chance."

As soon as his friend came on duty he turned in himself and was asleep inside of a couple of minutes.

It was broad daylight when he woke up.

He found Dick asleep on the opposite bunk.

Surprised at this, he went on deck to look around, and discovered the boat tied to a tree on a small wooded island near the north shore.

There was hardly any wind, and the river flowed as smooth as the surface of a mill pond.

There wasn't a house, or an indication of life in sight.

Sid guessed he might as well return to his bunk and take some more rest.

In a few minutes he was asleep again.

Two hours passed and then a boat put out from the opposite shore and started across the river.

It was full of black men, but in the stern sat a white girl whose pretty face reflected every symptom of acute distress and fear.

It seemed clear that she was in her present situation against her will.

As a matter of fact she was a prisoner in the hands of the blacks.

When the party came in sight of the island they saw the sailboat, and their curiosity was excited.

They altered their course and made for her.

Running alongside half of the blacks boarded her in a bunch, and as many as could at one time stuck their heads in at the door of the cabin.

They saw two sleeping boys.

With a grunt of satisfaction the leader led the way in, and Sid and Dick were aroused to find themselves prisoners.

CHAPTER IX.—Into Great Namaqua Land.

The boys were dragged out with little ceremony, and while two of the blacks held them the rest ransacked the sailboat.

At first Sid and Dick thought they had been overhauled by a party sent out by Captain Sombrero, but they soon saw that these negroes were of a different class from those inhabiting the village they had left.

Their attire and manners were different.

They looked more uncouth and savage.

"We seem to be getting it in the neck right along," said Sid.

"That's no dream. I hope this isn't our finish. I don't like the looks of this crowd."

At that moment Sid caught sight of the girl in the boat.

"Why, there's a white girl in the boat alongside," he said in surprise.

"By George! So there is," exclaimed Dick. "Looks as if she's a prisoner, too. I wonder who she is, and where these radicals picked her up?"

As Sid was about to address her the chief of the black bunch came up and stared at him and Dick.

"Where from?" he asked.

Sid pointed down the river.

"Where goin'?"

Sid pointed up the river.

"You two—dat all?"

Sid nodded.

"You come with me. Take um to big kraal. Show um to King Dahomey. He great man in him country. Much power. 'Pose he take fancy to um make um great mans. You no wish come me take um. No help 'self."

"All right, we'll come," replied Sid, who saw they had no choice in the matter. "How about the boat?"

"No want boat. Leave um. Go," and he pointed to the boat alongside.

The girl had been looking at the boys almost from the moment they had been brought out of the cabin.

Their appearance had been a surprise to her, but she expected no aid from them, as she saw that they were virtually prisoners like herself.

Room was made in the boat close to the girl for Sid and Dick, and then the black men abandoned the sailboat and made for the shore.

"Excuse me, miss," said Sid to the fair girl, "you appear to be a prisoner in the hands of these rascals."

"I am," she replied in a quivering voice, her eyes filling with tears. "I was carried off last night from a large ostrich ranch where the lady whose traveling companion I am is visiting. Her brother owns the ranch, and she expects to stop there three months."

"You are English, I suppose?"

"No; I was born in the United States, and have lived there till I secured the position with the lady I mentioned, who is quite wealthy, and is also an American."

"What is your name?"

"Bessie Bronson."

The girl's name, as it passed her lips, had no significance for Sid, for he had never heard of Miss Bronson, and yet here he was brought face to face in the strangest manner in the world, with the very young lady that his late uncle, Harper Golding, had elected he must marry, within a year, provided she was willing, in order to succeed to the bulk of his fortune.

It was certainly a strange freak of fate.

"My name is Sidney Sherwood, and this is my friend, Dick Duncan," said Sid. "Both of us belong to New York City. Dick came to South Africa for his health, and I on business in the employ of a circus representative seeking animals for his show."

Then, in as few words as possible, he told her how Dick and himself came to be in their present unenviable position.

After Sid had concluded his story, the girl told hers.

She explained how she had been traveling in England and various European countries with Miss Black, a middle-aged maiden lady, whose home was in one of the brownstone fronts on Fifth Avenue, New York, and that they were winding up their tour at the ostrich ranch of the lady's brother, being booked to sail from Cape Town in two months.

Miss Bronson then said that she was fond of horseback riding, and to enable her to enjoy that healthful recreation, Mr. Black had placed one of his horses at her disposal during her stay.

She went on one of these long rides the previous day, and, venturing into the lower part of the range, to view a waterfall she had learned was there, she had suddenly come upon the party of natives in whose power she now was.

The result of the encounter was her seizure by them.

They turned her horse loose and immediately started north with her, in spite of her tearful protests.

The presence of the two boys, who were her own countrymen, greatly comforted Miss Bronson, and the future did not look quite as dark as it had shortly before.

Finally the leader of the band gave some order in a guttural tone and the boat was headed in for the nearest bank.

They were screened from the hot rays of the sun by the thick leaves of the largest tree.

A bag was taken from the bows of the boat and its contents tumbled out on the ground.

This proved to be a kind of dried meat, a lot of cakes made of rice and meal, and some fruit.

The prisoners were permitted to land this time, and they stretched themselves wearily in the shade.

The food was divided among all hands, including the prisoners, with perfect impartiality, and the blacks made short work of their portions.

After disposing of it they lay down and went to sleep, with the exception of one of their number deputed to keep watch on the prisoners.

The party remained at their resting place until sunset, when the leader gave orders to re-embark.

The prisoners were aroused and marched aboard the boat.

Progress up the river was resumed and continued all night, the blacks occasionally resting on their paddles for ten or fifteen minutes at a time.

As for the prisoners, they dozed in their seats, Sid supporting Bessie Bronson's head on his shoulder, and holding her with one of his arms around her waist.

CHAPTER X.—The Kraal of King Dahomey.

Sid was the first to wake up to the fact that another day had dawned upon their unhappy condition.

Dick was bent forward, with his elbows on his knees, and his hands supporting his face, asleep.

Bessie Bronson's head, with its mass of uncombed brown tresses, still rested on Sid's shoulder, and her gentle, regular breathing told him that she, too, was unconscious, for the time, of her desperate position.

At that moment the boat swept around a turn in the stream, and a large native village burst on Sid's view.

There were at least a hundred huts of various sizes, all one story, of course, with thatched roofs, and walls constructed of a species of bamboo.

They formed a large semi-circle around a big open spot, like the square of a city.

At the head, or fourth side of the square, stood a long stone building of one story, with a flat roof.

About a quarter of a mile in the rear of this building was another structure which overlooked the landscape at a height of perhaps sixty feet.

This was the temple, or idol house.

As soon as the boat was perceived from the shore, quite a crowd of blacks came lazily toward the landing to welcome the bunch that had been away.

"Wake up, old chap," said Sid, shaking Dick. "We are at the end of our journey, I guess."

Bessie also opened her eyes, released herself with a blush from Sid's partial embrace, and then the three young people viewed the novel scene before them with quite some interest, notwithstanding the seriousness of their own situation.

The leader of the expedition, standing up behind the prisoners, ordered them to step ashore.

Dick led the way, and Sid, with Bessie clinging to his arm, followed.

At a guttural command the rowers closed around them, the leader went to the front, and then the line of march was begun which took the party toward the square.

The villagers followed, making the air resound with their exclamations.

At the edge of the square the crowd around them and at their heels stopped, and they, attended only by their captors, advanced toward the long stone edifice.

Their approach had evidently been noted from the building, for the curtain parted and a tall black man, of powerful physique, very lightly clad, appeared.

To him the leader addressed himself, and they held quite a pow-wow.

The black chap stepped forward and uttered some command.

Immediately the guard that stood around the three young prisoners fell back and left Sid, Dick and Bessie Bronson standing by themselves.

The black man, who appeared to be a personage of some importance—Sid wondered if he was King Dahomey—looked them over narrowly, his attention being chiefly concentrated on Bessie.

Having finished his inspection he turned around and re-entered the building.

A moment later a gorgeous-looking black man walked pompously forth, followed by a black female, bedecked in gold and silver jeweled ornaments.

The new comers were King Dahomey and his queen consort.

Neither had any more clothing than the climate would stand for.

What they had, however, was of the brightest and most striking material.

The king's legs were bare from the knees down, but only the queen's ankles showed below her light tunic.

Around the ankles of both were heavy golden bands, while their feet were protected from the ground by sandals, the cross-bands of which were thick with precious stones.

The arms of both were bare to their shoulders, and were decorated at the wrists and above the elbow with lighter bands of pure gold.

The king wore a naval officer's cocked hat, to which many jewels and feathers were attached, while the queen had on a golden tiara, that sparkled in the sunlight with diamonds, rubies, sapphires and other precious stones.

The big black man came forward, and, seizing Bessie by the arm, led the shrinking girl forward a step or two and left her standing before the ebony queen.

Her majesty scanned the young American girl critically, and finally uttered a grunt of satisfaction.

She said something to the king, who in turn said something to the big black man, whereupon that personage walked up to Bessie, grabbed her once more by the arm and, pointing at the curtained entrance, intimated that she was to enter the building.

Bessie turned around and looked appealingly at Sid.

That lad stepped forward in a resolute way and caught the girl's other arm.

The king looked angry at this action on the boy's part, and gave some order in his own language.

The leader of the bunch that had captured the prisoners came forward and laid his hand on Sid's shoulder.

As Bessie was led away King Dahomey looked the two boys over.

Then he gave an order to the leader of the boat's crew.

The leader repeated it to his men, who at once closed around the boys and they were marched away.

CHAPTER XI.—In a Sealed Dungeon.

"Well, I wonder what's going to happen next?" said Dick when he and Sid found themselves shut up in a hut with a guard at the door. "It's my opinion we would have fared better had we stayed under Captain Sombrero's thumb."

Sid made no reply, but walked up and down the earthen floor of their prison like an animal in a cage.

Several hours passed and then some dinner was brought to the boys.

The meal consisted of cakes of rice and meal and a gourd of water.

Soon after they had finished it the leader of the boat's crew appeared.

"Me come tell um dat King Dahomey t'ink um make bery nice fetish."

"What's that?"

"Me no quite able to 'splain zactly. Fetish am t'ing ob much 'portance."

"That suits us."

"Bery painful, dough, to become fetish."

"How is it?"

"Make fetish diff'rent way. Sometimes stick um on sharp stick and let um wiggle so," and the black illustrated the idea with his fingers. "Bime-by um dead and den bery good fetish indeed," grinned the speaker.

His explanation served to give the boys a glimmering of what was really meant by making a fetish of a person.

And as the realization flashed across their minds it gave them both a very uncomfortable sensation.

"Nudder way am to tie um to stake out in mountain and den hyena eat um. Bery painful, but bones make bery ex'lent fetish. P'raps King Dahomey try dat on one of um. No know just how he make fetish of um yet. He 'cide bimeby. Now 'pose um come with me."

The boys didn't like the idea of going with him, for they suspected that something unpleasant was in prospect; but they had no choice about the matter, for he called in a couple of blacks, who laid hold of the boys and they were marched off around the village and finally brought to the idol house.

Here they were turned over to the three priests of the temple—and a treacherous, sneaking bunch the trio were.

They were small and thin in comparison to the handsome looking villagers, with countenances several degrees lighter, showing pretty clearly that they originated from a different grade of humanity.

Every evil impulse in their hearts was photographed on their hang-dog faces.

Truly the priests of the temple were a bad lot, and Sid and Dick felt a sinking at their hearts when confronted by them.

They received the boys with sardonic grins, as if it gave them great pleasure to make their acquaintance.

They couldn't speak nor understand a word of English, but their sign language was perfect.

The boys were pushed into the idol room where three hideous images were on pedestals of stone.

The central and largest figure had eight arms and the head of an elephant.

The idol on its right had a gorilla's body and two female heads; the one on its left hand was a rotund male figure with its head in its stomach.

The boys were brought before the main idol and told by signs to prostrate themselves before it in worship.

"What do you take us for?" cried Sid.

The priests insisted.

Of course the Christian boys wouldn't think of obeying their orders.

One of the priests struck a gong hanging against the wall.

Two gigantic blacks appeared in answer to the summons.

The chief priest, the most wicked-looking of

the three, uttered an order in his language, and immediately the herculean blacks laid hold of the lads.

They forced them over to the doorless entrance of a large bare room at the back of the principal idol and shoved them into the chamber, which had a single window overlooking the nearby mountain range, and two bamboo chairs beside it.

A great smooth stone slab was fitted in the floor the exact width of the entrance and six feet beyond it.

The rest of the floor was formed of small, regular-shaped slabs, all accurately adjusted.

As the boy staggered forward across the big slab, it suddenly revolved beneath their feet, and caused them to slide off its smooth surface into a deep, dark hole beneath.

As they disappeared, uttering exclamations of consternation, the exultant cry of the priests rang through the temple.

The slab returned to its place without a sound, and Sid and Dick were left in a senseless heap in their new quarters.

At last Sid came to his senses, and for a moment or two he wondered where he was.

The place was so dark that it wasn't possible to get the faintest idea of the surroundings.

Feeling around with his hands, Sid encountered Dick's body beside him.

"Lord! We are done for this trip," he said to himself, for the first time yielding to a sense of despair. "We've tumbled into a hole from which there is probably no escape, and here we shall be kept, maybe till we starve to death, and then through time become grinning skeletons. Probably this is one of the ways they made fetishes, as they call them. A nice thing to have our bones distributed around among these heath-ens."

At that juncture Dick struggled into a sitting posture.

"Gewilikins! Where am I?" he cried aloud.

"Where you're likely to stay for the rest of your short existence," replied Sid.

"Is that you, Sid?"

"It isn't any one else."

"Do you know where we are?"

"I do not, but I guess we're in a hole under the temple."

"Well, let us examine our surroundings and see what we can make of them."

Sid was willing, though he did not believe any good would come of it.

"We must move around cautiously, for there may be another hole in this place leading to a still deeper cavity," he said. "Stand up and give me your hand. Now stretch out your right arm while I stretch out my left."

"I don't feel anything," said Dick.

"Neither do I. Swing around in a circle keeping your arm extended."

This the boys did without result.

"The place is larger than I thought," said Sid.

"I'm going to move sideways and will pull you with me."

In a moment or two Sid announced that he was close to a stone wall.

"We'll follow it around. I'll take the lead," he said.

Fifteen minutes completed their examination of the dungeon.

Floor and walls were of stone, and the roof presumably of the same material.

There was not a means of ingress or egress that even a fly could have availed itself of, so far as they could make out in the dark, which was so dense as to be almost felt.

A feeling of utter and overwhelming despair took possession of the two boys.

CHAPTER XII.—In the Mountain Cavern.

Several hours passed, the two boys sitting with their backs against their dungeon wall and little inclined to talk. In time they fell asleep.

Presently the great slab above their heads revolved a part of its way and then came to a stop.

A light was flashed down into the hole, and its rays revealed the evil countenance of one of the priests.

The light showed him the sleeping boys.

The priest then with one hand lowered a flat native basket, containing a lighted lamp and some food, into the hole.

When it touched the floor he disengaged the rope and pulled it up.

Leaving the slab open to permit the escape of the foul air, and the introduction of fresh, he sat down on one of the chairs and waited a certain time.

Then he removed the obstruction which held the stone and it speedily completed its revolution and settled into place once more.

Changing the air in the vault had the effect of awakening the boys after a little while, and they were amazed to see the place lighted up by a lamp standing in a basket with a small amount of food.

"I guess they don't mean to do us up in a hurry after all," said Dick, beginning to take fresh heart.

"Not from the looks of that," replied Sid.

The food proved to be rice cakes, some kind of meat, and a species of liquor that felt refreshing to their palates.

After having eaten and finished a good part of the drink they began to review their situation a bit more hopefully.

But they did not talk long, for they soon began to feel drowsy—a fact they ascribed to the confinement of the vault—and ere long were sound asleep.

It wasn't the closeness of the vault, but a native drug put into the liquor, that sent them off into the land of dreams.

An hour later the huge stone partly revolved again and two of the priests looked down at the prisoners.

Satisfied that the boys were under the influence of the narcotic they dropped a rope ladder into the vault.

Down this one of the gigantic black servitors of the temple went, and, picking up Sid, passed him up to his companion above.

He did the same with Dick, and then came up.

The blacks picked the boys up in their arms, walked through a passage to the rear of the temple, and out into the open air.

They took their way toward the mountain range a short distance away.

In the course of an hour they came to a cavern in a ravine.

Entering it, they proceeded through the darkness to the back of it, where they connected with a long, tortuous tunnel which they followed.

It was evident that they knew their way well, for they had no light to guide their footsteps, and never hesitated a moment for fear of any obstruction in their path.

Finally they reached an inner cavern.

The entrance to it was provided with a huge slab of stone that answered for a door.

It swung on a heavy pair of hinges, but did not fit snugly when closed.

It could be held shut by means of a heavy hasp and staple.

Preparations had evidently been made here to receive somebody, presumably the boys, for there were two beds of rushes, two bamboo chairs, and a bamboo table.

From the ceiling swung a gourd filled with oil in which floated something that gave forth a dim light, sufficient, however, to vaguely illuminate the cavern.

This basin was always full, the excess running over its edge among the rocks, and disappearing somewhere in the depths.

The two blacks laid their burdens on the beds, and then retired the way they had come, closing and securing the door after them.

It was not till morning that Sid and Dick woke up out of their drugged sleep, which they did almost simultaneously, and they were amazed to find themselves no longer in the vault, but in the cavern we have described.

"We must have been brought here while we slept," said Dick, after they had got over their astonishment at the change, which seemed to them like a transformation worked by Aladdin's lamp.

"How else?" replied Sid. "We didn't come here awake. We seem to be in a cavern in the mountains."

"We surely are. I wonder what the change means?"

"I'll never tell you, for I'm as much in the dark as you are yourself. Hello! What's on the table? Looks like grub."

They walked over and saw that there was about a week's supply of food.

"This water won't last us more than a day. We'll have to be sparing of it," said Dick, for neither of them had yet noticed the basin in the corner.

"Oh, I dare say our captors will fetch us more by and by, since they have left us a big supply of food," replied Sid. "Well, I'm hungry, so let's have breakfast."

"It seems clear that we are not to be made fetishes of in a hurry," said Dick, feeling a bit jolly at their somewhat improved situation.

"They may be keeping us for a sacrifice of some kind at one of their approaching religious festivals," suggested Sid.

"Oh, I say, don't be thinking about such things. Let us talk about some plan for making our escape," said Dick.

"We'll examine this cave first, and see what chance there is of getting out of it," answered Sid.

"The only entrance seems to be where that rock blocks the way."

"Let's look at it."

They did, and soon found that they couldn't move it more than an inch on its hinges.

"No getting through there," said Sid.

"If there isn't then we've got to stay here."

"I guess we were put here to remain."

That fact gave their feelings a setback, and for an hour they indulged in many gloomy reflections.

Eventually they grew brighter, taking courage in the reflection that while there is life there is hope.

That day passed away without anyone coming to visit them.

So did the next, and the one after.

By that time they had made quite an inroad on their supply of provisions.

"I think we'd better go slow with our eating," said Dick, one morning when they began their breakfast. "There is no telling when we will get a fresh supply."

Sid agreed with him and that day they went on half rations.

Two days afterward their food was almost exhausted.

They finished the last at supper that day.

They turned in early and were soon asleep.

When they awoke in the morning they found that their food supply had been renewed during the night, and that the gourd lamp had been replenished with oil.

"We do eat after all," said Dick, with a faint grin. "It's a wonder neither of us heard the coming of the supply man. This is a good indication that we are not to starve while we remain here."

"But how long will we remain here?" said Sid.

That was something neither could tell, and as the days merged into weeks, and the weeks into months, they ceased to think about it, for they began almost to regard themselves as life prisoners.

In the meantime their disappearance from Cape Town had brought consternation to Mr. Clarke, Dick's tutor, and speculation to Mr. Dicer, Sid's private watchman.

It was known that they had hired a sailboat and gone down the bay, ostensibly to see the Pelican, cruiser.

Boatmen were found who had seen them making for the warship.

The captain of the vessel was communicated with, and through his efforts the sentry reported that after the boys found they could not board they had continued on toward the mount of the bay.

Mr. Clarke made arrangements with the captain of a fast sloop to search for the missing sailboat and the boys.

He was away three days, and on his return had nothing to report.

The tutor took every means in his power to find the missing ones, but at the end of three weeks gave up in despair, and cabled the bad news to Dick's father.

Mr. Dicer did nothing on his part, but waited the result of Mr. Clarke's efforts.

He sent the news by mail to Henry Golding a few days after the boys failed to show up, and said that, in his opinion, both boys had been drowned. At the end of the month he cabled Golding that the boys were surely dead, and asked if he might come back. While Golding was overjoyed at the news, he was not positively certain that Sid was out of his way, so he cabled Mr.

Dicer to remain at Cape Town, and keep his eyes peeled. The sporty man loafed about town for some months, then he made the acquaintance of a trader from a town up the coast beyond the Orange River, and that person invited him to return with him and stay a while. Mr. Dicer accepted the invitation and went. The settlement was called Gumbo, and the sporty man liked it so well that he continued his stay indefinitely. Eventually he had reason to feel sorry he ever went there.

CHAPTER XIII.—Rescued By a Girl.

At first Sid and Dick tried to keep track of the lapse of time, but gradually they grew careless and lost track of the matter.

"I guess we've been here a year," remarked Dick, one morning, "and still we're alive and being supplied with food as regularly as clockwork almost."

"It seems a great waste of energy on the part of King Dahomey to keep us here so long," replied Sid. "Still we may figure that the wily old rascal has some object in it. I'd give a whole lot to know how Bessie is getting on."

"Maybe she's married to the king long before this. Some of these African potentates have a whole string of wives."

"Say, don't make such suggestions. You'll make me crazy."

"Excuse me, old chap, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. I know you're dead gone on that girl. Case of love at first sight. And she seemed to cotton to you, also. It's too bad to think matters have turned out as they have."

The day passed away as others had before it. Night came around and they turned in on their beds and were soon asleep. Some hours later Sid was awakened by a touch on his shoulder. He started up and confronted—Bessie Bronson.

"Bessie!" he cried, springing to his feet, hardly believing his eyes. "Is it really you?"

Before she could answer he grabbed her in his arms and covered her blushing face with kisses. Then he recollected himself and began to apologize. She was not displeased, however, for Sid had never been out of her thoughts from the moment she was parted from him in front of the door of the king's dwelling.

"Why, Bessie, I've been thinking and worrying about you ever since you were taken into the king's quarters the day we were brought to this locality. I suppose you've been a kind of maid to the queen."

"Yes, and she's taken a great liking for me," replied the girl.

"Is that so? Then I suppose that accounts for you being here?"

"Yes, I've had perfect freedom for many weeks, but it was only this morning that I learned from the queen where you and your friend were confined, though I've known from the first that you were prisoners."

"Do you know why we are kept in this cavern, which seems to be somewhere in the mountains?"

"It is in the mountain range to the west of the village, about a mile from the temple. You have been kept for the grand annual sacrificial festival that will come off in a few days."

"Goodness! What is to be done to us?" cried Sid, excitedly.

"Nothing, I hope, for I am here to help you and Dick to escape this night," she said earnestly.

"Thanks, you dear sweet girl!" cried Sid, catching her in his arms again.

"Oh, dear, what a bear you are!" she said, looking confidently into his face.

"We have not a moment to spare, dear Sid. We must fly through the mountains at once. I have learned the location of a defile that will take us through, and then we will have only a hundred miles to go to reach the town of Gumbo on the coast."

Sid went and aroused Dick with a jerk.

"What's the matter?" asked Dick, sleepily.

"Get up and come along. The door is open and we're going to escape."

"Who in thunder is that?" asked Dick, looking hard at the girl, who was partly clothed in native costume. "It can't be Miss Bronson."

"That's who it is, you lobster. Come, get a move on."

"How did she come here?"

"Never mind that now. We've no time to talk. We've got to sneak while the opportunity is ours. Do you want to be offered up as a sacrifice in a few days?"

"Not on your life I don't."

"Then get busy. Grab that basket of cakes, while I'll take this one of fruit. Bessie, you take the gourd full of water. Now we'll go."

After they had passed out into the passage, Sid thought it would be a good idea to secure the door as it was.

"That will puzzle the black when he comes here later on. He won't know how we got out."

"He'll think we flew up that hole in the roof," chuckled Dick.

The village was scarcely more than a mile away, but they couldn't see it owing to the fact that a spur of the range lay between it and their view. Bessie led the march further up the mountains and after a short walk they entered the defile. This road to the western side was long and winding and took them hours, with occasional stops for rest, to pass through it. It was close on dawn when they came out among the foothills, and made for the dense woods that lay before them.

"We must keep on as long as we can so as to put as great a distance as possible between us and the village for your safety, Bessie," said Sid.

During the long walk through the defile the girl told them of her experience as waiting-maid on the queen, and how she had learned the language of the tribe; and Sid, in his turn, told her of how he and Dick had passed their time in the cavern during the long spell of their confinement there. Soon after the sun rose they sat down for their first meal. After their breakfast and a good rest they resumed their journey. The woods sheltered them from the heat of the sun, so they were able to keep on at a speed they could not have maintained in the open country.

At length about noon they reached the end of the forest, and the prospect beyond looked so sweltering that they deemed it prudent to rest till sunset and then go on during the night.

Selecting a sheltered nook, they ate their din-

ner and then stretched out under the bushes and were soon asleep.

It was sundown when Sid awoke, and he was much alarmed to discover a black man seated near them helping himself to their rice cakes.

"Hello!" he said, forgetting that it was not likely the black man would understand what he said. "Who are you?"

It happened that the native did understand some English.

"Me Quacco. Berry much hungry. 'Pose you no 'jection me eat a little bit. Where goin'."

"Where do you belong?" asked Sid, cautiously.

"Me belong in Gumbo on coast."

"That so?" cried Sid, joyfully. "We're going there. You'll show us the way?"

"You no know way?" asked the black, in surprise.

"No. We're mixed up. Lost."

"Me show you way. Dat pay for what me eat."

"Sure. Eat all you want," replied Sid, forgetting that with an additional mouth to feed they were likely to run short of food long before they reached their destination.

"Me eat. Bery much t'anks. Bimeby reach village and get more."

At that point Dick woke up and almost had a fit when he saw Quacco, but Sid put him at his ease with a few words.

"'Pose um like see fetish stone?" asked Quacco, as soon as he had eaten all he wanted. "Come, me show. Bery much sacred. All make um bow, den hab good luck."

He led the curious boys to an open spot where they saw a round stone mound of considerable diameter, and about three feet high, projecting from the ground like a great squash, while in the centre of it stood a huge flat stone.

"Now make bow," said Quacco, bowing very low.

The boys laughingly imitated him, Dick putting one hand on his head and the other on his stomach, while Sid tried to touch the ground with his forehead, losing his balance in the attempt and going sprawling on the earth.

As he started to scramble to his feet his attention was arrested by a mass of curious pebbles, some of which gave off a brilliant sparkle in the last rays of the setting sun, that lay in a hole the dirt covering of which he had accidentally displaced in falling.

Looking closer he found that they were in a bag that was open at its mouth.

He pulled the bag out and examined the pebbles.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "These look like the rough diamonds we saw on exhibition in Cape Town."

"So they do," cried Dick. "I'll bet they are diamonds."

As the boys were examining the rough diamonds they heard a noise behind them.

Turning, they saw the stone on the mound rise slowly, and the head, shoulders and body of a fierce-looking negro followed through the hole beneath it.

"Great Scott! What have we here?" cried the startled Sid

CHAPTER XIV.—Conclusion.

Quacco fell prone on the ground with fear, while Dick looked as startled as Sid.

The apparition paid no attention to them, but commenced to bow to the setting sun, muttering what seemed to be a string of prayers.

The boys gazed at him in a kind of awe, for the same thought struck them both—that the devotee was sightless.

When the sun finally disappeared and night settled quickly down on the landscape, the fierce-looking negro sank slowly back into his odd habitation, which was probably the roof of an underground cave, and the stone fell back into its niche.

Not till then did Quacco look up, and his black face was gray with fright.

"Good t'ing dat we bow to dat fetish stone else somet'ing bery bad happen us," he said. "Now we go. Fetish in bery good humor so we hab luck. Get to Gumbo much quick."

"I hope so," replied Sid, holding on to the bag of rough diamonds that, though he knew it not then, represented a fortune.

Bessie was astonished to see Quacco, and tried to converse with him in the language of the blacks beyond the range, but he didn't understand a word, so she had to fall back on English.

The party, with Quacco in the lead, started westward at once, and they had to walk lively to keep up with him.

They walked all night with intervals for rest, and in the morning they came to an abandoned hut, where they put in the greater part of the day sleeping.

They walked all that night, and next morning Quacco led them into a small native village, the inhabitants of which greeted them in a friendly manner.

Here they stayed all day, sleeping in one of the huts, and at nightfall resumed their way with all the eatables they could carry.

They averaged a little over twenty miles a night, and on the sixth day after their escape they came in sight of the broad Atlantic.

"Gumbo only four mile more dat way," said the negro, pointing.

Never did water look so delightful to the eyes of the three fugitives as did the ocean that morning.

Their nearness to their destination spurred them on, though weary, to a fresh effort, and in about a hour they walked into the coast settlement.

As they walked down the main street of the place they saw a jaunty looking man coming toward them.

"By ginger, Dick, that chap looks like Mr. Dicer," cried Sid.

"That's who it is," replied Dick, after a good look.

Sid ran forward and grabbed the astonished sport by the arm.

"Don't know me, Mr. Dicer? I'm Sid Sherwood, turned up at last, and there is Dick Duncan right behind. Thought we were drowned, didn't you?"

Mr. Dicer gasped and looked as if he were going to have a fit.

"Where in creation have you been?" he asked.

"That's a long story which we'll tell you by and by after we have had a rest. Now, is there any place where Dick, I and their young lady can put up here?"

Here Sid introduced Bessie to him.

Bessie's name had no significance for Mr. Dicer, as Henry Golding had not considered it necessary to disclose her identity to him, which, as we said before, was how he made the mistake of his life.

We can't say that Mr. Dicer was delighted to see Sid.

The year wasn't up by a matter of two months, and there was still time enough for the boy to reach New York and learn that he was heir conditionally to his late uncle's property, and doubtless, in that even, try to make good.

The sporty man, however, thought he would have no great trouble in detaining him long enough to kill his chances, so he exhibited a friendly attitude and said there was an inn where they could stop, and volunteered, as they were strapped, to stand all expense.

He knew that whatever he laid out for Dick would be returned to him with interest, and Sid's expenses was part of his arrangement with Golding, so that really all he would be out was what he expended in behalf of the girl.

He took them to the inn and guaranteed to pay their account, and that afternoon late he called and heard the story of the boys, with an outline of the girl's misadventures.

Later on he had a private talk with Sid, and then he learned to his astonishment and satisfaction that the boy was going to marry Miss Bronson.

"You can't do it too soon, my dear chap," said Mr. Dicer, eagerly, figuring that if the pair were actually married that would kill Sid's chance of getting his fortune, for then he couldn't possibly marry the other girl in New York.

"Why so?" asked Sid, in surprise.

The sporty man explained that the authorities of Cape Colony were giving a bonus to all who married that month, which was a lie.

"You've got just two days to win 100 pounds," he said, glibly. "That's \$500. See the girl and talk her into it, and tomorrow I'll take you both around to the missionary and get you spliced. Then with the certificate in your pocket you'll collect the money as soon as you reach Cape Town."

Sid believed him, and as \$500 was a lot of money, he broached the matter to Bessie.

"We have no money and it will pay our way back to New York," he said, not figuring on the bunch of pebbles turning out real diamonds. "As we're going to get married some time why not now?"

Bessie declared that it was awfully quick, but finally yielded her consent.

Sid passed the word to Mr. Dicer the next morning, and that delighted sport soon made all the arrangements with the missionary.

That afternoon Sid and Bessie were made one in the presence of Dick and the cheerful sport, who signed the book as a witness with great alacrity, little thinking he was instrumental in uniting Sid to the girl named in Harper Golding's will, and thus upsetting all of Henry Golding's calculations.

As Dick was feverishly eager to reach Cape

Town where he could cable to his father, Mr. Dicer arranged for the passage of all hands in a schooner sailing at once.

Three days later they reached the Cape, and Dick sent his cable, saying that he was coming home on the steamer that sailed two days hence as Mr. Dicer had agreed to advance the passage money.

Sid found that the sport had lied to him about the 100 pounds bonus, and he was disappointed and angry.

"It was just a joke of mine," laughed he. "Never mind, I'll pay your way, and your wife's, to New York. We'll all go together," he added, thinking of the \$6,000 coming to him from Henry Golding as soon as he told that gentleman of Sid's marriage.

But he didn't have to advance a cent to anybody, for Sid soon found that the rough pebbles he had found in front of the mound were worth a small fortune. He sold them for 10,000 pounds, or \$75,000, and paid Dick's passage as well as his own and Bessie's.

In due time the party landed in New York, and Mr. Dicer hastened to report the success of his mission.

"So the boy was turned up alive, after all?" cried Golding.

"Yes."

"Well, it doesn't matter. The year was up to-day at two o'clock. He's out of his fortune."

"He'd never get next to it anyway. He's married."

"Married!" cried Golding in astonishment. "Who did he marry? Some Cape Colony girl?"

"No. She's an American he found during his wanderings. Her name was Bessie Bronson."

"Why?" gasped Golding, turning white, for he had learned through Lawyer Mudge that Miss Bronson had disappeared mysteriously in South Africa from the ostrich farm where she had been staying with the lady whose companion she was.

Mr. Dicer repeated the name.

What followed we will leave to the reader's imagination, but the sport passed a very uncomfortable hour, and left knowing that he had sacrificed his \$6,000.

Lawyer Mudge also had the surprise of his life when he learned the truth, which meant the loss of over \$20,000 money loaned by him to Golding.

However, he put the best face on the matter he could, and communicated to Sid his good fortune, and so our hero not only came into a fortune in diamonds, but also secured the bulk of Harper Golding's property, although missing for a year.

Next week's issue will contain "PHIL THE PLUNGER; or, A NERVY BOY'S GAME OF CHANCE."

ized Ford dealers in the United States. Approximately 250,000 additional persons have placed their orders, but have not made cash payments.

Preparations for production on a full capacity basis are proceeding rapidly, Ford officials say. The manufacturing plants have been at work for several weeks turning out major parts of the new car and a few days more will see the famous Ford assembly line in operation.

The capacity of the Ford plants for both manufacture and assembly have been greatly increased since production of the Model T was suspended early in the summer to make way for the new car. The assembly line, formerly at the Highland Park plant, has been moved to the Fordson plant on the River Rouge, where its capacity has just about been doubled. The Highland Park plant, in turn, has been converted to the manufacture of certain body and other parts exclusively.

The Ford plants here have continued throughout the summer to manufacture and ship all over the world huge quantities of replacement parts for the nearly ten million Model T cars still in use by owners. Ford officials estimate that for several years to come nearly a third of the plant operations here will be devoted to the manufacture of Model T parts to keep these cars in running order.

SMALLEST CAR LINE TO QUIT

New York City's shortest street car line, the Van Brunt street and Erie Basin Railway, operating about a mile of track from Hamilton ferry to Erie Basin, Brooklyn, asked Justice Carswell in Supreme Court, Brooklyn, recently to appoint a receiver so that the little railway could file a petition of voluntary dissolution and go out of existence.

The financial woes of the company were set forth in the affidavits filed with the application. The most serious debt facing the company, the affidavits say, is a judgment for \$10,040 obtained by Mrs. Elizabeth Nilson for personal injuries inflicted by one of the company's little four-wheeled cars. Besides this, on a revenue of \$140 a day, the company has been running up annual deficits of a little more than \$1,000. Bonds outstanding total \$75,000.

HIS WORST TROUBLES

"What's that busy senior throwing all his books into the river for?"

"He's drowning his sorrows."

—Wash. Cougar's Paw.

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125,000 ORDER NEW FORDS AND MAKE DOWN PAYMENTS

The sales department of the Ford Motor Company announced recently that 125,000 "advance orders with deposits" for the new Ford car, not yet in production, had been placed with author-

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Ninety Degrees South

or, Lost in the Land of Ice

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER I.

Unexpected Passengers.

Two young men were riding downtown in a Broadway car in the city of New York one October morning a few years ago when two persons entered and took seats opposite.

One was a very pretty girl of about twenty, wearing a derby hat and a long, double-breasted storm-coat, her curly hair cut rather short for a young woman.

Her companion was a man who might have been anywhere from forty to seventy years of age, as far as one could tell by his looks.

He was tall, thin, smooth-shaven, very bald, quite near-sighted and with an absent-minded look which showed that his thoughts were anywhere but upon his surroundings.

His clothes were of somber black, his hat was a broad-brimmed felt; he wore boots not too carefully polished, and his turned-down collar was encircled with a black silk scarf.

He settled into his seat and began poring over a book through large, gold-bowed spectacles, paying no attention to anything else. The girl, finding that the chatelaine bag at her belt was empty, gave him a quick nudge and whispered:

"Have you any change? I have lost my purse."

"Eh? What's that, my dear?" and the old gentleman suddenly aroused himself.

"Won't you pay for the fare? I have lost my purse."

"Certainly, my dear, certainly," and the gentleman thrust his hand into his trousers pocket without producing anything therefrom.

"Why, bless my heart, I do believe I've come away without any change," he muttered, as he examined one pocket after another without finding anything.

"Then, we'll have to go back and get some money," said the young lady. "It's awkward, too, having so little time to spare."

"Let me be of service and save you the extra journey," said Phil Freeman, one of the young fellows sitting opposite. "If time is really an object, it is too bad to waste it."

"It really is, and you are very kind," said the girl, as Phil gave the conductor a dime. "You must let me send the money to you when we return to our hotel."

"It really doesn't matter," said Phil, "and then, unless you send it at once, it is doubtful if I ever get it, as we are going to sail today, to be gone a long time."

"You are going to Europe? How funny! Uncle and I sail tomorrow morning. We go on board tonight to save time. Do you sail on the Polaria?"

"No. We are not going to Europe. We are going to the South Pole, or at least that is what Captain Harry Essex expects. He is bound for latitude ninety degrees south, and expects to get there."

"Dear me, how dreadfully cold he will find it," said the old gentleman. "I am going myself to attend a congress of scientists at Bergen, Norway, and expect to find some cold weather; but the South Pole! Dear me, I never thought of anything like that. So you young gentlemen are going with the expedition?"

"Yes, sir," said Phil. "I am an assistant engineer, and my friend here, Mr. Richard Foster, is taking a sort of post-graduate course under the ship's doctor. Dick has his diploma, but no practice."

"And Phil has his license with nothing to work it on," laughed the other.

"Thus we're all going away and none of us has any time to spare," said the young lady. "I will send you the dime, however, if you will give me your address."

"On board the exploring steamer Pioneer, Captain Harry Essex, master, is the best address I can give you," said Phil, "but I haven't yours in order to acknowledge the receipt of the dime."

"Miss Sadie Hunter, steamship Polaria, bound to Christiania, is all I can give," said the girl, smiling. "This is my uncle, Prof. Jeremiah Waddles, A. M., Ph. D., L. L. D., F. R. G. S., and a lot of other things. He's very absent-minded, and I always go along to take care of him."

The professor had taken up his book again and was entirely oblivious to everything else, while the two boys and Sadie chatted away merrily until the former had to leave the car.

"Good-by, Miss Sadie," said Phil. "I am sorry that we shall not meet again."

"Oh, but we might."

"Not in a long time, at all events."

"Perhaps not so long," said Sadie. "I'll send you the dime, however."

Then the boys said good-bye, and went about their errands, never expecting to see or hear of Sadie Hunter again.

The Pioneer lay at her pier ready to leave at almost any hour that night or the next morning.

The captain, having already cleared, was simply waiting for a few last supplies.

On the other side of the wharf lay the Polaria, an ocean steamer which was to leave the next morning, many of her officers having already made the Pioneer a visit of investigation.

The Pioneer was a trim little steamship, being well built for such an expedition as that on which she was bound, having sharp bows, a frame of steel, stout masts, a good hull, and fitted with all the modern appliances.

Her captain, Harry Essex, was a man of thirty-five, the possessor of an independent fortune, an enthusiast in scientific research, a man of indomitable courage, iron will, and most determined persistence, just the one in short, to be at the head of such an expedition, all the expense of which he paid from his own pocket.

If unlimited means could make such an expedition successful, then Captain Harry Essex was sure to succeed; but whether he did or not will be told later.

He had set his mind on taking the Pioneer to

latitude ninety degrees south—to the South Pole, in short—and had selected, as he considered, just the crew to accompany him, none being forty years old, and all possessing health, strength and determination.

The short autumn day had come to a close when the two boys entered the main salon, saluting the captain, who sat reading under a hanging lamp, a dark-browed, heavily-bearded man sitting opposite.

"Good-evening, young gentlemen," said Captain Essex. "This is Mr. Wills, my first officer. You have not met before, I believe? Mr. Philip Freeman, assistant engineer, and Mr. Richard Foster, M. D. I trust you will find each other's society agreeable, gentlemen, as it is my desire that all my ship's company should be harmonious."

Mr. Wills merely bowed curtly and Captain Harry Essex continued:

"Now that you are here I wish you to remain, as we are likely to leave at any hour. There is a storm coming, and it will be well to have plenty of sea room before it comes. I am only waiting for the doctor, and then we will probably get away."

The boys went to their rooms, which adjoined, and the master went on deck, while Mr. Wills, taking a folded paper from his pocket, held it under the lamp, and scanned it carefully.

"H'm! it's all right," he muttered. "Mr. Phil Freeman is here, and so am I, and here are my instructions, which I am likely to follow. Whether Master Phil ever reaches ninety degrees south is immaterial; but that he will never return to forty degrees north is certain."

The night set in dark and threatening, the wind whistling through the rigging, the air being chilly and the weather not such as to tempt any one to remain on deck.

The gang-plank was still out, and a light still burned at the door of the salon, but there were few stirring, and Jim, the negro steward, dozed in his chair just inside the door.

Phil, buttoned in a long, heavy coat, and his hands thrust deep into his pockets, was parading the main deck on the lee side at ten o'clock when two figures, closely muffled, hurried up the gang-plank.

He was not near enough to see their faces, and as the door leading to the salon was opened, the light was nearly blown out.

All he could see as the two disappeared was that they both wore long coats, and carried suit-cases, and that one had a derby and the other a soft felt hat.

On his next round he saw Jim, and asked:

"Who was it, Jim?"

"De doctah an' him frien', Marse Phil. Dey axed ter be showed right away to deir cabins, an' I reckon dey is fas' asleep by his time."

"Did you tell the captain? He said he would sail when the doctor came aboard."

"Didn' say nuffin' to me abo't it, but ef he axes me, I'll tell him."

Shortly after that, however, Captain Harry Essex himself came on deck, and asked:

"Jim, who was that who went below just now?"

"Dat was de doctah, sah. He axed me ef dis was de Pioneer, an' I tol' him it was. Den I axed him ef he was de doctah, an' he said he

was, an' wen' straight to his cabin, him an' his 'sistant, an' I reckon dey am bofe asleep by dis time."

"All right," and Captain Harry Essex went into the pilot-house.

Half an hour later the Pioneer left the harbor, and by daylight the next morning there was no land to be seen, and they were speeding before a piping northward gale.

After breakfast Phil went on deck and saw a figure in a long coat and a derby hat well up forward.

It turned as he reached it, and to his utter amazement he beheld the pretty face of Sadie Hunter.

"Why, Phil, I mean Mr. Freeman, did you change your mind, and sail on the Polaria after all?" asked the young lady.

"No; but you have evidently changed yours, Miss Sadie, as this is not the Polaria at all, but the Pioneer."

"Impossible! Uncle Jerry asked the steward when we came aboard last night, and we understood him to say it was the Polaria. We went to our cabins at once. They are next to each other. I went right to sleep, and slept gloriously, but I am afraid that poor Uncle Jerry is awfully sick. I could hear him groaning this morning. I am awfully glad you came. Did your friend come, too?"

"Certainly. We are both members of the ship's company. I don't know how we are going to manage about you, though. You will hardly want to go to the South Pole, I fancy."

"Phil Freeman, are you joking?"

"I was never more serious in all my life. Look up there."

On the pilot-house, just below the bridge, was a board, bearing in gold letters on a black background the name:

"PIONEER."

"Merciful sakes!" cried Sadie. "How on earth did Uncle Jerry make such a mistake? And I came along to look after him!"

"Our two vessels lay on either side of the same pier, the names are similar, it was dark and stormy, Jim was half asleep, the doctor was expected, your uncle said he was the doctor, and there you are."

"Well, but I should think some one might have told us."

"I saw you come on board myself, but if a girl will wear a boy's hat, short hair, and a long coat, and carry a suit-case, she mustn't find fault if folks take her for a young man. I did and I presume Jim did also."

"It's very stupid," said Sadie, walking up and down excitedly. "Folks will say that I need some one to look after me instead of my going along to take care of Uncle Jerry. What are we going to do? Can't we go back? Can't we overtake the Polaria?"

"I am afraid not. We have a long start, the storm is driving us ahead, and Captain Essex is anxious to make all the speed we can. You see, we are under sail as well as steam."

"Well, I'll have to tell Uncle Jerry about it, anyhow."

(To be continued.)

Fame and Fortune Weekly

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INTERESTING ARTICLES

WOULD TUNE-UP FOR HEAVEN

Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, addressing the Rock River Conference recently, said: "If you don't cultivate a taste for music you will have a miserable time for about 1,000 years after you get to heaven." Ragtime and jazz, he said, "have had their day."

SIX IN VAULT

Four or five men robbed the First National Bank of Aurora recently of approximately \$10,000 in currency and an unknown number of Liberty bonds. The robbers escaped, scattering tacks along the highway behind them, causing the tires of pursuing automobiles to be punctured.

Three bank employees and three customers were ordered to lie down on the floor behind the counter, and were later locked in the vault.

PRISON FOR FLAG "INSULT"

For appearing at a theatre here draped in a Turkish flag, Victoria Hatchikian, Armenian actress, is in prison. The Turkish theatre proprietor also is in prison for "permitting an employee to insult the Turkish flag."

Curiously enough, the emblem which the Nationalist Turks guard so jealously, is of Greek origin. Once Philip of Macedon was about to take Byzantium (the old name for Constantinople) by surprise, and was favored by a stormy night.

Suddenly, the legend says, the crescent moon and its companion star broke through the clouds, and a Byzantine guard perceived the spears of the approaching enemy. Thus warned, the Byzantine Greeks repulsed Philip, and in gratitude to the moon and star, adopted the emblem, which was later taken over by the conquering Ottomans and has been preserved by the Kemalist Turks.

CARDINAL BANS "BEAUTIFUL ISLE" AND OTHER FUNERAL "SOB-PRODUCERS"

Cardinal O'Connell served notice recently that henceforth the singing of certain English hymns at funeral services in the Catholic churches of this archdiocese will not be tolerated.

In an official communique published in the current issue of the Pilot, he says:

"I have noticed lately that on several occasions at the funerals held in our churches, vulgar and profane English hymns, composed entirely by people who have no faith, but plenty of maudlin sentiment, have been sung at the end of the ritual. One of these hymns, 'Beautiful Isle of Somewhere,' a flagrant outrage to faith and the ritual, seems to be the favorite sob-producer.

"The Catholic ritual is so noble, so sublime and so divine, that only a vulgar mind could be guilty of insulting it with such trash.

"I call this to the attention of the pastors and the people of the archdiocese in order that this revolting experience will not be repeated. Any organist or choir director allowing such a stupid performance in the future will be immediately suspended or discharged."

LAUGHS

He—Once for all, I demand to know who is master in this house? She—You will be happier if you don't find out.

Edith—Are you going to prosecute Jack Dare for stealing a kiss? Betty—No, the property has been returned.

Mistress—What do we need for dinner? Servant—Sure, ma'am, and I've tripped over the rug, an' we need a new set of dishes.

Hub—Well, it takes two to make a quarrel, so I'll shut up. Wife—That's just like a contemptible man. You'll sit there and think mean things.

Ella—He says that he is a self-made man. Stella—He may have done the construction work, but the plans and specifications were made by a monkey.

"I want a pair of pants for my sick husband," exclaimed the woman. "What size?" asked the clerk. "I don't know, but I think he wears a 14 1-2 collar."

"What did you say your age was?" he remarked between dances. "Well, I didn't say," smartly replied the girl, "but I've just reached twenty-one." "Is that so?" he returned, consolingly. "What detained you?"

"When we were first married I allowed my wife twenty dollars a week for household expenses." "Yes, and now?" "She allows me a dollar and a half a week for lunches and carfare."

"Here, conductor!" yelled an infuriated passenger on a Southern train, "that was my station, suh! Why didn't youh stop theah, suh?" "We don't stop theah no more; engineer's mad with the station agent."

The Maniac Witness

Tom Brown was not exactly a maniac, though that is what the good people of the village of D—called him. He was rather a harmless sort of fellow, who had been out of his mind for ever so long a period, and was allowed to roam at liberty, an object of compassion for the charitably inclined, and the sport and butt of the young and careless.

In his simple way he was as faithful as a dog to those who treated him kindly, and to no one was he more attached than to Mary Wallace, the blacksmith's daughter.

Mary was a bright, buxom lass of eighteen or thereabouts, and secretly in love with Paul Danvers, the only son of Squire Danvers, who was at the same time the richest man in town and the magistrate of the county; but to humor Mad Tom she promised to marry him as soon as he could count to a hundred and repeat his letters.

It was ludicrous to observe with what assiduity the poor lunatic—who, by the way, was the same age as Paul, that is, twenty-two or three—cudgelled his poor, shattered brains to fulfill these, to him, arduous conditions. Every scrap of paper he came across he would preserve and show it to Mary and ask her to explain it to him.

Meanwhile strange things were happening in the little village. Squire Danvers had had a bitter quarrel with the blacksmith; had forbidden his son even to speak to Mary, on pain of disinheritorship and had been seen in close conversation with old Sykes, a money-lender and reputed miser, who lived in an old tumble-down shanty on the outskirts of the village. The next day Sykes had presented for payment to the blacksmith an old, overdue mortgage, which the honest mechanic had long and in vain tried to liquidate. The interview was a stormy one, and the miser left the smithy threatening to begin foreclosure proceedings on the following day.

Dan Wallace, as might be naturally supposed, was greatly downcast by this threat, and when night settled down on the village bade his daughter an affectionate adieu, and taking his gun with him, started off for the next village, which was some ten miles away, to see a friend residing there, who might possibly lend him the sum required by the miser.

At ten o'clock that night, a belated villager passing by near old Sykes' shanty heard the report of a gun, then a cry for help and hastening into a clump of bushes behind the house, from which the sounds proceeded, he discovered, lying on the ground, the dead body of the miser, while bending over him, gleefully shouting and laughing, was Mad Tom.

"Old Sykes murdered!" exclaimed the villager, examining the body in the light of the moon; "shot through the heart. Who did this, Tom?"

"Me know him, but won't tell. Mary goin' marry me soon's I can count an' read. Me ain't goin' put her father in jail; she won't marry me, then. Me won't tell."

"Heavens! Dan Wallace the murderer!" gasped the villager.

When he returned with the village constable and several assistants, the maniac was busily poring over the pages of a small memorandum-book which he had just picked up, and also a small piece of half-burnt and charred paper, which had evidently formed a portion of the wad in the gun. These articles he managed to secrete about his person without the others perceiving it.

The dead body of the miser was removed to his shanty, and a search in the vicinity for the murderer resulted, not in the capture of the blacksmith, but in the finding close at hand of his long cloak and gun, the barrel of which showed that it had been but recently discharged.

The excitement in the village was intense, and it kept on increasing when day after day passed and nothing could be discovered of what had become of the blacksmith, who had not been seen in the village since the day of the murder.

It was surmised that he had secretly returned to his cottage in the night, and that Mary was concealing him about the premises, and though Paul Danvers, in spite of his father's protestations, defended the young girl from the objurgations of the turbulent masses, yet on the third day they were too powerful for him, and breaking down the barricade which he and Mad Tom had erected around the house, they ransacked the place from cellar to garret, without, however, discovering the object of their search.

"Are you now satisfied?" indignantly exclaimed the young man, winding his arm around the waist of weeping Mary. "Are you not ashamed of the way you have treated a poor, defenseless girl?"

"Humph! a fine girl," replied his father, who was one of the assailants, "the daughter of a murderer."

"Liar!" cried a voice, whose ringing accents sent a thrill of surprise through all the assemblage.

It was the blacksmith. He stood there before that throng, livid, suffering both in body and mind, his clothing tattered and torn, his features haggard and emaciated; but from his eyes flashed the lightning of innocence and indignation, and he surveyed the haughty form of the squire from head to foot with a glance of unutterable scorn and contempt.

"Father, dear father!" exclaimed Mary, running impulsively toward him, and folding her arms around his neck.

The blacksmith gently put his daughter away from him, and extending his hand to the young man, said:

"Paul Danvers, can you take me by the hand, look me straight in the face and say that you believe me to be innocent?"

"I believe you to be innocent. I say so with all my heart."

"It is well," said Dan Wallace. "I need not ask Mary whether she believes the same. She is my daughter. Now, constable," added he, holding forth his hands, "manacle my wrists, lead me off to jail. I am ready."

A week had passed since the arrest of the blacksmith.

For some reason or other the squire, before

whom the preliminary examination was to take place, had deferred it from day to day, but on this morning it was to occur.

On a bench before the little cottage sat Mary, awaiting Paul, who had promised to call and accompany her to the court house.

She was absorbed in a painful reverie, from which she was aroused by a tap on the shoulder, and looking up beheld Mad Tom standing before her. He was holding the memorandum-book in his hand.

"Me very sorry, Mary," said he, "that your father in jail. Me take no lessons no more, an' never learn nothing. You never marry me, then, Mary, will you?"

She smiled faintly and asked:

"What have you got there?"

"Book with numbers. Here me read them: One, two, three, four, seven——"

"Five," interrupted she.

"What you call five?" asked he.

"Five comes after four, then six, and then seven."

"Not in this book. See, that's four, hey?" asked he, pointing to the number printed near the edge of one of the leaves of the memorandum-book.

"Yes."

"And that's seven, hey?" added he, pointing to the number on the opposite leaf.

"Why, there's a page torn out of the book," said Mary.

"And five and six on that page?"

"Yes."

"I've got it," exclaimed he, while a broad grin passed over his features.

He drew the bit of partly-burned paper from his pocket and handed it to Mary.

Sure enough, the numbers were printed thereon, and at a view it could be seen that it was a part of the missing page.

At that moment Paul arrived, and no sooner had he seen the book in Mary's hand than he exclaimed:

"My father's private memorandum-book? Where did you get it?"

"From Tom," replied she; "this paper looks as if it had formed part of a charge in a gun."

Paul looked at Mary; she gazed at him. For a moment neither of them spoke; then slowly and solemnly came the words from the young man's lips:

"Your father is innocent, and mine is the real murderer."

The courtroom was crowded. On the bench sat Squire Danvers, stern and dignified; on a chair near-by, closely guarded by two constables, sat Dan Wallace, the accused.

As for the maniac, no one expected him to testify, as it would not be lawful for him to do so. The main facts were the identification of the cloak and gun, the threat of the deceased to eject the blacksmith from the latter's premises, and the strange behavior of the accused since the murder.

"I think that there's sufficient evidence to hang you," said the squire brutally to the prisoner; "and at any rate, I shall commit you to jail with-

out bail until you can be indicted by the grand jury."

"Oh, if you only were not Paul's father," muttered Wallace between his teeth.

"The court is adjourned," said the squire. "Constable, remove your prisoner."

"One moment, if you please," cried Paul, at this juncture entering the courtroom with Mary and the maniac. "I charge you, Squire Danvers, with the murder of Sykes, the miser!"

The squire bounded from his seat as though shot from a cannon, and in a voice of mingled terror and dismay exclaimed:

"This from my son!"

"I am not your son!" replied Paul, "and I need only to show you this book to prove that, as well as the crime, which you are trying to fasten on an innocent man."

He held up the memorandum-book as he spoke.

"That book!" gasped the squire. "Then I am lost!"

Drawing forth a dagger, he made a dash at Paul to snatch the fatal book from him or stab him to the heart. The maniac sprang to the young man's assistance, and received the thrust in his heart.

"Miserable man!" exclaimed Paul as the poor maniac breathed his last in his arms, "you have killed your son!"

The squire waited to hear no more, but plunging the dagger in his heart, sank to the floor a corpse.

The whole story was now revealed.

When Mad Tom was little more than an infant his father, the squire, in a fit of anger had struck him a violent blow on the head, which rendered him insane for life. This act, instead of making him more tender to his offspring, only induced him to cast him off and adopt in his place a child which Sykes, the miser, brought to him. Recently, the miser had threatened to reveal the plot, and to avoid the scandal the squire struck upon the plan of murdering him and fastening the crime on the blacksmith, whom he cordially hated.

In company with some tramps, he waylaid and abducted Dan Wallace, and then taking the latter's cloak and gun, executed, as we have seen, the nefarious act.

The blacksmith had finally succeeded in escaping from his captors, and, easily tracing the plot to his enemy, had refrained from betraying him out of regard for Paul, whom he loved as a son.

The dark cloud of suspicion was dispersed, and soon the village bells rang out a merry peal, signaling the marriage of Paul and Mary, while hearty, jovial Dan Wallace is as happy as the day is long.

During a history examination the teacher asked the question: "When was Rome built?" The first to answer was a youngster near the front, and his response was: "At night." "At night!" repeated the astonished instructor. "How in the world did you get such an idea as that?" "Why, I've often heard my dad say that Rome wasn't built in a day," said the boy.

GOOD READING

CRAMP YARDS COMPLETE LAST VESSEL,
THEN CLOSE

With the delivery of the steamship Evangeline, the long and historic career of the William Cramp & Sons' Ship and Engine Building Company came to an end.

When the Evangeline, built for the Eastern Steamship Company of Boston and the 524th craft constructed at the plant since it was founded ninety-seven years ago, slipped down the ways, a glaring "For Sale" sign on the nine-story office building told the story. Officials attributed the passing of the famous plant to the inactivity of ship-building during peace times.

HOLLAND TUBE OPENS FOR TRAFFIC
ON NOVEMBER 13

The Holland vehicular tunnel, connecting New York and New Jersey under the Hudson, will be thrown open to traffic one minute after midnight on the morning of Sunday, November 13, the joint commission announced recently.

The formal opening will follow a day of ceremonies, including exercises at each end of the tunnel, the first to be held on the New Jersey side. President Coolidge, the Governors and Senators of both states, and other public officials will be invited to take part in the ceremonies and be driven through the tube. Following the double ceremony, the tunnel will be open for the rest of the day and evening for public inspection.

GRAVES IN AMERICA PUT AT 200 MILLION

Although the business of undertakers is never subject to depression, they have moments of relaxation, and in these Peter Loring, mortician, of San Antonio, Tex., figured up the number of dead in American graves since John Smith colonized Virginia.

Mr. Loring had to deal in averages and equations, but it was a task that appealed to the ambition of an undertaker. After working a year he found the total number of dead which have crumbled to dust in the United States is about 200,000,000. He told about it recently in a speech to his brother morticians.

"There are enough graveyards in the United States to cover the states of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware," he said.

FOUR NATIONS PLEDGE PEACE BY
ARBITRATION PACTS

Extension of the idea of arbitration which was advocated so strongly at the recent Assembly of the League of Nations as an effective road to disarmament is shown by two treaties registered to-day with the League. One between Sweden and Belgium provides that the World Court of International Justice shall settle "all disputes of every kind, when it is found impossible to settle them through the normal methods of diplomacy or unless the parties to the dispute have elected to refer conflicts to a conciliation commission.

The second treaty, negotiated between Denmark and Czechoslovakia, stipulates that all conflicts shall go either to an arbitration tribunal or the World Court.

WILLS BRYANT HOMESTEAD TO
MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY

Mrs. Minna Godwin Goddard, of 33 East Fiftieth street, New York, granddaughter of William Cullen Bryant, the poet, bequeathed in her will, which has just been admitted for probate, the Bryant homestead at Cummington to the Massachusetts Historical Society with an endowment of \$10,000.

Mrs. Goddard, who was the widow of Frederick N. Goddard, died at the homestead on August 7, at the age of eighty-two. Many years ago the society rejected a bequest of the homestead with its 200 acres made by Miss Julia Bryant, daughter of the poet, but accepted her bequest of \$10,000.

Mrs. Goddard left the Bryant upper farm of 100 acres to Frank Spears, her superintendent for twenty-four years. The Bryant homestead was built about 1780 by the poet's maternal grandfather, Ebenezer Snell, who first occupied the upper farm in 1774. Bryant's father, Dr. Peter Bryant, took his family to the homestead to live in 1799 when the poet was five years old.

By the will the contents of the homestead are a part of the residuary estate, which goes to the son, Conrad Goddard Godwin. Mrs. Goddard also left her portrait of San Georgio, by Swain R. Gifford, and laces to the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

PRISONER FLEES COURT WHILE CAPTOR
IS BUSY

Victor Lanzisero, twenty-three years old, did not wait recently to be arraigned on a statutory charge before Magistrate Jean Morris in Essex Market Court because there are too many doors in a room adjacent to the clerk's desk. While Patrolman Francis J. Watterson, of Traffic A, stepped out of the room to have the arraignment papers stamped by the clerk Lanzisero took advantage of his solitude and escaped. His most likely means of exit was the roof.

Lanzisero, who gave his address as 322 East Twenty-first street, was arrested Monday by Waterson at Fourteenth Street and Second avenue after a short chase. He was fleeing from the apartment of Mrs. Julia Felder at 231 East Thirteenth street, whom he had attacked, police said, after gaining admittance by posing as a light meter inspector. Her screams aroused neighbors and Lanzisero ran.

Lanzisero has been arrested eight times and has a record dating back to 1921. He has been sentenced to Elmira, the workhouse and Matteawan Hospital for the Insane, and Atlanta penitentiary. His escape from Essex Market Court was the first in five years.

CURRENT NEWS

RADIO TO PORTO RICO

A new direct radio communication channel between the United States and Porto Rico was officially opened recently with the transmission of a congratulatory radiogram from James G. Harbord, President of the Radio Corporation of America, to Horace M. Towner, Governor of Porto Rico.

\$50,000,000 GUM CHEWED YEARLY

The United States consumed more than \$50,000,000 worth of chewing gum last year, it was announced at the Candy Exposition now being held in Grand Central Palace. In 1914 only \$17,000,000 worth was sold, but, according to the 1925 commercial census, \$47,000,000 was sold and last year gum sales were \$3,000,000 more.

DOG PREVENTS SUICIDE

The life of a woman made despondent by ill health and attempting suicide was saved recently by a dog.

The animal, an English bull, whined and howled until neighbors came running to see what was the matter. They found Mrs. Arnold Fonner lying on the floor in a gas-filled room. A pulmotor squad revived her.

DR. MAGNES URGES \$10,000,000 HEBREW UNIVERSITY ENDOWMENT

Dr. Judah L. Magnes, chancellor of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem, was the guest of honor recently at a dinner given in the Hotel Biltmore by Mr. and Mrs. Felix M. Warburg. Many Jewish financial and business leaders attended.

Dr. Magnes described the work of the university since its organization three years ago, and said that the teaching faculty now comprises eleven professors, a gain of eight within two years. The great need of the school, he said, was an endowment of \$10,000,000, so that an annual income of considerable proportions could be assured.

FREE APPLES FOR ORPHANS

The free distribution of apples to orphanages, hospitals and other institutions again will open the apple season this year, October 29, Halloween. The distribution will be made by Joseph Sicker, local representative of the International Apple Shippers' Association, at No. 204 Franklin street.

All requests must be in writing and the association will undertake to see that no crippled or orphaned children are neglected in the Halloween allotment. The funds for the distribution come almost wholly from the apple dealers of this city.

EAT CANDY AND REDUCE

Eat candy and reduce, was the advice of William F. Helds, President of the National Confectioners' Association, who opened the First National Candy Exposition in Grand Central Palace recently.

"Soldiers in the World War marched on it,

explorers discovered the Poles with the knowledge of candy in their pockets, Gertrude Ederle swam the Channel almost with a sugar loaf in her mouth. Football heroes win games on the candy they have had in restricted quantities on their diet list," said Mr. Heide.

KNICKKNACKS IN LONDON SPROUT DYED FEATHERS

The feather craze has hit London, boutonnieres of curled and dyed chicken feathers are made to resemble the most intricate blooms, delicately tinted feathers adorn the tops of powder bowls. Small fluffy feathers ornament menu cards, leather handbags are inlaid with feathers, which are dyed to match the color of the skins. Silk evening bags are ornamented with white feathers slightly flecked with gold.

Prices in the feather markets have risen as a result of this demand.

DIPLOMACY PLEA FAILS ENVOY'S SPEEDING DRIVER

Martin Cercelaru, chauffeur for the Rumanian Minister to the United States, was arrested recently for cutting in and out of traffic while returning to Washington with other servants of the minister. He insisted that his diplomatic standing gave him a right to drive that way, then drove at fifty miles an hour to the police station, which caused Patrolman Mugavero to change the charge of speeding.

As he was unable to furnish \$25 bail, Cercelaru was locked up for the night, while the other servants found lodgings in the town. Bail was furnished this morning and the party proceeded at a more dignified rate.

\$15,085,000 PENSION FUND FOR PRESBYTERIANS

Final arrangements for the transfer of \$15,085,000 collected by Secretary of the Treasury Mellon and Will H. Hays for the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church were completed at the Treasury Department recently.

The Rev. H. B. Master, secretary of the board, and Dr. John H. Gross, treasurer, were officially notified that between May, 1926, when the drive for funds began, and May of this year, the \$15,085,000 had been collected in pledges and cash. A fund of \$3,400,000 is immediately available, and on October 1 the ministers began to profit by the new endowment.

Four years ago a committee of fifteen laymen were appointed to develop plans for pensioning Presbyterian ministers, their widows and orphans. Mr. Hays said to-day that the Presbyterian church was the oldest pension-paying institution in the United States, having begun the grants 210 years ago, although these had always been inadequate.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

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| 1106 Little Hal, the Boy Trader; or, Picking Lip Money in Wall Street. | 1130 The Little Operator; or, Cornering the "Bears" of Wall Street. |
| 1107 On the Gold Coast; or, The Treasure of the Stranded Ship. | 1131 Air Line Ed; or Building a Telegraph Line. |
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| 1122 Digging Up Dollars; or, The Nerve of a Young "Bull" Operator. | 1146 The Young Wall Street Jonah; or, The Boy Who Puzzled the Brokers. |
| 1123 A Runaway Boy; or, The Buried Treasure of the Incas. | 1147 Wireless Will; or, The Success of a Young Telegraph Operator. |
| 1124 The Old Broker's Heir; or, The Boy Who Won In Wall Street. | 1148 Wall Street Jones; or Trimming the Tricky Traders. |
| 1125 From Farm to Fortune; or, The Boy Who Made Money In Land. | 1149 Fred the Faker; or, The Success of a Young Street Merchant. |
| 1126 Rugged Rob of Wall Street; or \$50,000 From a Dime. | 1150 The Lad From 'Frisco; or, Pushing the "Big Bonanza." |
| 1127 The Boy Railroad Magnate; or, The Contract That Brought a Million. | 1151 The Lure of Gold; or, The Treasure of Coffin Rock. |
| 1128 Dandy Dick, the Boy Boss Broker; or, Hustling for Gold in Wall Street. | 1152 Money Maker Mack; or, The Boy Who Smashed a Wall Street "Ring." |

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